

ST. NICHOLAS.

VOL. XVII.

MARCH, 1890.

No. 5.

ON A MOUNTAIN TRAIL.

BY HARRY PERRY ROBINSON.



WE had no warning.

It was as if they had deliberately lain in ambush for us at the turn in the trail.

They seemed

suddenly and silently to rise on all sides of the sleigh at once.

It is not often that the gray timber-wolves, or "black wolves," as the mountaineers call them, are seen hunting in packs, though the animal is plentiful enough among the foot-hills of the Rockies. As a general rule they are met with singly or in pairs. At the end of a long and severe winter, however, they sometimes come together in bands of fifteen or twenty; and every old mountaineer has a tale to tell,—perhaps of his own narrow escape from one of their fierce packs, perhaps of some friend of his who started one day in winter to travel alone from camp to camp, and whose clean-picked bones were found beside the trail long afterward.

It was in February, and we, Gates and myself, were driving from Livingston, Montana, to Gulch City, fifty miles away, with a load of

camp supplies—a barrel of flour and some bacon, coffee, and beans; a blanket or two, and some dynamite (or "giant powder," as the miners call it) for blasting; a few picks and shovels, and other odds and ends. We had started at daybreak. By five o'clock in the evening, with some ten miles more to travel, the worst of the trail was passed. There had been little snow that winter, so that even in the gulches and on the bottoms the exposed ground was barely covered; while, on the steep slopes, snow had almost entirely disappeared, leaving only ragged patches of white under overhanging boughs, and a thin coating of ice in the inequalities of the hard, frost-bound trail, making a treacherous footing for the horses' hoofs.

The first forty miles of the road had lain entirely over hills,—zigzagging up one side of a mountain only to zigzag down the other,—with the dense growth of pine and tamarack and cedar on both sides, wreathed here and there in mist. But at last we were clear of the foot-hills and reached the level. The tall forest trees gave place to a wilderness of thick underbrush, lying black in the evening air, and the horses swung contentedly from the steep grade into the level trail, where at last they could let their legs move freely in a trot.

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Hardly had they settled into their stride, however, when both animals shied violently to the left side of the trail. A moment later they plunged back to the right side so suddenly as almost to throw me off into the brush.

Then, out of the earth and the shadow of the bushes, the grim, dark forms seemed to rise on all sides of us. There was not a sound,—not a snap nor a snarl; but in the gathering twilight of the February evening, we saw them moving noiselessly over the thin coat of snow which covered the ground. In the uncertain light, and moving as rapidly as we did, it was impossible to guess how many they were. An animal which was one moment in plain sight, running abreast of the horses, would, the next moment, be lost in the shadow of the bushes, while two more dark, silent forms would edge up to take its place. So, on both sides of us, they kept appearing and disappearing. In the rear, half a dozen jostled one another to push up nearer to the flying sleigh,—a black mass that filled the whole width of the trail. Behind those again, others, less clearly visible, crossed and recrossed the roadway from side to side. They might be twenty in all—or thirty—or forty. It was impossible to tell.

For a minute I did not think of danger. The individual wolf is the most skulking and cowardly of animals, and only by some such experience as we had that night does a hunter learn that wolves can be dangerous. But soon the stories of the old mountaineers came crowding into my mind, as the horses, terrified and snorting, plunged wildly along the narrow trail, while the ghost-like forms glided patiently alongside—appearing, disappearing, and reappearing. The silent pertinacity with which, apparently making no effort, they kept pace beside the flying horses was horrible. Even a howl or a yelp or a growl would have been a relief. But not so much as the sound of their footfalls on the snow was to be heard.

At the first sight of the wolves, I had drawn my revolver from the leather case in which it hung suspended from my belt. Gates, handling the reins, was entirely occupied with the horses; but I knew, without need of words, that he saw our pursuers and understood the peril as well as I.

"Have you your gun?" I shouted in his ear. A negative shake of the head was all the answer. So we must trust to the six cartridges in my revolver.

"How many wolves are there, do you suppose?" again I called.

Again he shook his head, as if to say that he could not guess.

So the minutes passed and we swept on, rising and falling and swaying with the inequalities in the trail. The dark forms, growing more indistinct each minute, were hanging doggedly to the sleigh.

Suddenly I became aware that a wolf was almost at my elbow; its head was on a level with my waist as I sat in the low sleigh. In the darkness I could plainly see the white teeth, and the dim circle of the eyes. I hardly had to lean over at all to place the muzzle of the revolver within a foot of the great round head before I fired. I saw the black form roll over and over in the snow as we went by. Simultaneously, two other shadowy shapes that had been running abreast of the horses, in advance of the animal that was shot, dropped back; and looking over my shoulder I could see them throw themselves upon their wounded fellow. As the sea-gulls, following in the wake of a vessel in mid-ocean, swoop from all directions upon some floating scrap that has been thrown overboard, so from both sides of the trail the dark figures rushed together into one struggling mass behind the sleigh; and for the first time we heard them snapping and snarling at one another, as they tore their comrades to pieces.

The horses appeared to know that in some way a gleam of hope had come. They ceased plunging and seemed to throw all their energies into putting as wide a space as possible between them and the yelping pack behind.

How long would the respite be? Seconds passed until half a minute had gone. Then a minute. Could it be that they had left us—that the horrible race was over?

But even as the hope was forming itself in my mind, I became aware of a dim, gray thing moving beside me. A moment later another appeared, close by the horses' heads, and behind us the trail was again full of the jostling pack.

It was terrible beyond expression, the utter noiselessness with which they resumed their places,—apparently tireless; keeping pace with the racing horses without a sign of effort; patient as fate itself. Have you ever been on a fast steamship—say a “P. and O.”* boat in Indian waters where the sea is transparent—and, leaning over the stern, watched a shark following the vessel? If so, you remember how, hour after hour and day after day, the dark, vaguely outlined body, not more distinct than the shadow of a cloud upon the waves, stayed, motionless to all appearance, just so many feet aft in the ship’s wake, no matter how fast she moved. To me, and I think to every one who has seen it, that silent, persistent, haunting presence is the very embodiment of ruthlessness and untiring cruelty. There, in the twilight and shadow, was the same silence, the same indistinctness, the same awing impression of motionless speed, the same horror of the inevitable, in that pursuit by the wolves.

But soon their tactics changed. Either they had grown bolder, or the wolf they had eaten among them had put a keener edge upon their appetites. There were now four or five of the ghostlike forms moving abreast of the horses on my side of the sleigh alone. On the other side more were visible. They were now closing in upon us, with determination. Suddenly I saw one make a spring at the throat of the off horse, and, missing his aim, fall back. The horses had been terrified before; from that moment they lost all control of themselves. Neither the driver’s voice nor his hands upon the reins had any influence upon them as they tore wildly down the narrow path between the bushes, snorting, throwing their heads from side to side, and breaking now and again into short, shrill neighs of terror. The breath from their nostrils and the steam from their bodies made a white cloud in the wintry night air, almost enveloping them and us, and at times blotting out of sight the wolves beneath.

But the pack was again closing in. In front of all, I could see one running under the very noses of the horses, keeping just beyond the reach of their hoofs, and evidently waiting for the right moment to make a final leap at their throats. Leaning forward, and steadying my aim as well as I could in the rocking sleigh, I fired full at

the whole dark mass in front. Apparently the ball passed harmlessly through them, but in an instant all had vanished—behind and into the bushes—as a swarm of flies vanish at the waving of a handkerchief. Only for a second, however, and one after another they were back again.

A second shot, fired again at random into the mass, was more successful; and once more we saw them drop back and crowd together in the trail behind us while the snapping and snarling grew fainter as the horses plunged on.

Half of the last ten miles had now been traveled, and five miles more would bring us to Gulch City and security. The excitement of that race was unspeakable: the narrow lane of the trail lying white ahead of us and behind us between the dark borders of the brush, seen fitfully through the steam from the maddened horses.

But the respite this time was shorter than before. Once more our relentless foes gathered round us, silently, one by one. The wolves seemed to know as well as we, that time was short and escape lay not far away; for hardly had the pack settled in their places round us before I saw one animal throw himself recklessly at the horses’ throats. There was a sudden mad rearing up of both the horses, a wild, despairing neigh, a short yelp from the wolf’s throat, and the dark form that had seemed to hang for a moment, leech-like, to the chest of one of our brave beasts was beaten down under the hoofs.

The others did not wait even for the sleigh to pass, but leaped upon the struggling form even as the runners were upon it. In my excitement I did a foolish thing. Leaning over, and thrusting my revolver almost against the skins of the fierce brutes, I fired two shots in quick succession. They had their effect, I know, for I saw one of the dark figures throw itself convulsively out of the mass into the brush, where others sprang upon it, and a death-cry went up in the night air. But we could ill spare the ammunition.

This idea evidently occurred to Gates. Leaning suddenly toward me, but with his eyes fixed on the horses and the road ahead, he called:

“How many shots have you left?”

* Peninsular and Oriental.

"Only one."

"Not even one apiece for us?"

And I knew that he was in earnest. I knew also that he was right; that it would be better to die so, than to be torn to pieces by that snarling, hungry crew.

But it was too late now. Five shots out of the six were spent, and twenty minutes yet must pass before we could reach the camp. And even while these few words were being said the pack was close upon us again. Fiercer now, and more determined than ever to make an end of it, they crowded around. One even flung himself at the low side of the sleigh to snap at me, and his teeth caught for a moment in the sleeve of my coat as I struck him on the head with the clenched hand holding the pistol. On both sides, too, they jostled each other, to reach the flying horses, and I knew that in a few seconds more I must sacrifice the last cartridge in my revolver.

As a forlorn hope I snatched the buffalo-robe which lay on Gates' knees, and threw it to them. But they hardly stopped to tear it to pieces. There was more satisfying food in the sleigh. And they closed around the horses again.

For the first time Gates turned to look at me.

"Jack!" he called excitedly, "the giant powder!"

For a moment I did not grasp his meaning. Seeing my indecision he shouted again:

"The giant powder, Jack!"

Then it came to me. Thrusting the pistol into its case, I scrambled over into the rear part of the sleigh, and as I did so the wolves that were following behind fell back a few feet. Hastily fumbling among the various supplies, I found the old sack in which the sticks of dynamite were wrapped, and with them the small package of caps and fuse. Taking three of the sticks, I tied them tightly together with my handkerchief and, quickly fitting the end of an inch of fuse—for, in this case, the shorter the piece the better—into a cap, I thrust the latter into the center of the three sticks. I was still at work, when a sudden swing of the sleigh and a cry from Gates warned me that something was the matter. The horses were plunging violently, and as the near horse reared I saw that a wolf had leaped upon its withers and was

clinging, with its teeth apparently in the side of the horse's neck. In their terror, the horses had stopped, and were actually backing us into the brush. Something had to be done, and with some vague hope, I fired the last shot from the revolver into the dark circle which already surrounded the plunging horses. The shot had its effect, for one of the brutes leaped into the air with a yelp and fell backward into the bushes. The horse, too, sprang suddenly forward, and the wolf that was clinging to it fell to the ground and was trampled under the hoofs. In an instant, those of the pack that had not already flung themselves upon the wounded animal in the bushes, rushed upon this one that was lying lifeless or stunned from the horses' feet; and once more, for a few seconds, we had breathing space, and the sleigh sped along through the keen air, our enemies snarling and quarreling behind us.

But the last shot was spent!

Turning my attention again to the giant powder, I fixed the cap and fuse more firmly in their place, and taking off my belt wound that tightly round the whole. Round that again I wrapped one of the old sacks, and tearing off my coat made an extra covering of that, knotting the sleeves tightly on the outside, that the ravenous teeth might be delayed in tearing the bundle apart. Crouching down in the sleigh, I lighted a match, and, as I did so, I saw that the wolves were upon us again, apparently as numerous and as tireless as ever. The match went out; and a second. Crouching lower still, I made a barricade against the wind with anything I could lay my hands on in the sleigh, and at last a dull red spark caught the end of the fuse.

The pack was already crowding round the terrified horses, which, it seemed to me, were almost worn out, and moved more heavily than heretofore. And how slowly the fuse burned! Nursing it carefully with my hands, I blew upon the spark and kept it glowing as it ate its way slowly into the cotton. Why had I not made it shorter? Every moment I expected to feel the sudden jolt which told that the wolves had pulled down one of the horses and that the end had come!

At last the dull red glow had almost reached

the end of the cap. A few seconds more and it would explode. Thrusting the bundle hastily into another sack, forgetting even the wolves in my terror lest it should explode in my hands, I threw it with all my force into the midst of the moving forms abreast of the horses.

The beasts flung themselves upon it, and as we swept by, the whole pack was again collected into a struggling, snarling heap beside the trail. We were sweeping round a curve in the road,

grim, gray, ruthless forms reappear? The seconds passed; minute followed minute, and the horses, breathing painfully, labored on over the level trail. With every yard traveled, hope grew stronger, until leaning over again I said to Gates:

"I don't believe they 're coming, Charlie."

But his only reply was a shake of the reins and another word to the horses.

Then suddenly there came a twinkle of light



THE EXPLOSION.

and before the horses had taken a dozen strides, the brush shut out the path behind us and the wolves.

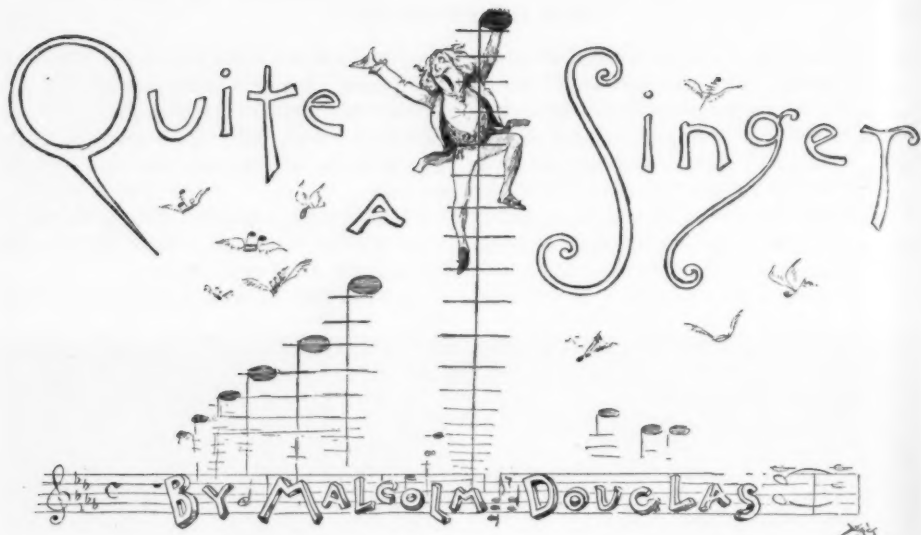
A moment later and the air and the earth shook around us. I was still half standing, clutching the low side of the sleigh, and the concussion threw me upon my face. The report was not the crash of a cannon nor the sharp noise of gunpowder, but a dull, heavy roar like an instantaneous clap of distant thunder. The stillness that followed was intense, but I thought that I heard, from the direction where the wolves had been, one broken, muffled howl.

What had been the effect of it? Both Gates and myself leaned forward and with voice and hand urged the horses on. When would those

in the distance. The brush fell away from the trail and the white expanse of the clearing of Gulch City was before us.

* * * * *

For a distance of fifty yards, at a point about a mile and a half north of Gulch City, the old Livingston trail had to be abandoned. It would have been more labor to repair it than to clear a new pathway through the brush. And when I left that part of the country two years afterward, the packers would still turn out of their way for a minute to look at "Giant Hole," and to kick up out of the weeds and brush that had grown around it the skull or part of the skeleton of a wolf.

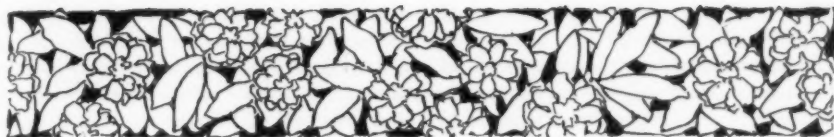


A LITTLE man, pressed for a song,
 Could not be induced by the throng.
 "I 'm sorry," he said,
 With a shake of his head,
 "But I 've not brought my music along."

"It 's a pity it happens just so,
 For you 'd all like my tenor, I know;
 So high it can rise
 That I oft close my eyes
 So terribly dizzy I grow."

"The musical scale, as you see,
 Has the letters from A up to G;
 And, if it were set
 Through the whole alphabet,
 I believe I could go up to Z!"





THE CROWS' MILITARY DRILL.

BY AGNES FRASER SANDHAM.



I HAVE never shared the farmer's hatred of the crow. There is an air of aggressive independence about him which I like, and I find a certain dignity in his glossy black coat which compels my respect. Even his

unmusical voice is not without power and meaning, and at all events it compels attention.

One September day, while I was in the beautiful English "Lake Region," I heard repeated cawings high in air, and saw a great number of crows flying about in so singular a manner that I soon began to suspect that their actions were directed to some special purpose. There was a gentleman present who was a keen observer of nature and skilled in the secrets of animal and vegetable life. I asked him what the crows were doing. He watched them for a few moments, and then said, gravely, "They are going through their military drill."

Seeing by my expression that I did not take his answer seriously, he repeated it reassuringly and asked:

"Did you never hear of the crows' military drill?"

"No," I answered. "What is it?"

His explanation was so interesting to me that I have written it, as nearly as possible, in his own words.

He said:

"In consequence of ill health, when I was a boy, I had been sent away for a whole year to rusticate, and stayed at a farm occupying high

ground on the borders of the great Chateaugay Forest, along the dividing line between New York and Canada. There I had an opportunity to study the habits and peculiarities of the crow, and I was not at all prepared for the wonderful sagacity shown by these birds.

"Across the road, directly in front of the house, there were thick woods, the remains of the primeval forest. Here rose high in air many giant hemlocks, and, on account of their commanding position, these were a favorite resort of crows. Every night they would gather in great numbers, and, toward the fall, their incessant cawing, during the evening hours, became really deafening. I had an odd neighbor, Ned Greer by name, but better known by his sobriquet of 'Old Powder and Shot,' owing to the fact that he was never seen without his fire-arms. This old hunter had been born and brought up on the borders of civilization, and hunting was his life. Give him his gun and his traps, and Ned was happy; without them, he would declare, without reservation, that life was not worth living. I remarked to him that the crows seemed to be holding a convention. Like all men who have lived long either at sea or in the depths of the forest, Ned was slow of speech. So, after waiting a proper length of time to think of his answer, he remarked, 'They're a-drilling for their journey south.'

"About a year before I had enrolled my name as member of a volunteer company, and had spent weary hours going through what the old soldiers called the 'goose-step.' So the word 'drilling' fixed my attention, and I resolved to study the crows and to find out, if possible, how they managed their 'goose-step.'

"The next evening, therefore, I stowed myself away by the side of an old stone fence which commanded a good view of the hemlock woods. Before long, the crows began to assemble from all points of the compass, but I could make out nothing but that they seemed to be exercising their wings. At intervals a few would leave their roosts upon the boughs, and after flying in a circle of a few hundred feet return to the branches. Thus far I had not observed any change from their usual habits, and I returned home disappointed.

"In the morning I reported to the old hunter that he had been fooling me, and said that the drilling of crows was 'a humbug!' After looking at me in silence for an unusual length of time (even for him), he remarked sententiously, 'Things is interesting to folks as knows something.'

"I was silenced, whether owing to his grammar or to his philosophy I could not decide; now I am inclined to think it was the contemptuous satire of the remark, that subdued me. But, at the time, his scorn had the result of making me resolve to learn by observation all that was to be learned about crows.

"That evening found me again at my post, and this time I discovered that, amid the hubbub of cawing, one hoarser voice predominated. I also made another discovery: that always after this loud voice had spoken, a number of the birds would leave the trees for their circular flight, and that each of these detachments would return to the same tree it had left. It became quite evident, therefore, that there was method in their actions, and, moreover, that one crow was in command.

"Next day I again reported to Ned Greer.

"'Yes,' said the hunter, 'that same old crow has been the General ever since I can remember; he knows all about the business.'

"'How can he keep so much knowledge in so small a head?' I inquired.

"'You see, my boy, that old chap's head has such little room to rent that to live without crowding it, he's got to *disremember* about as much every day as you can learn in a year.'

"From this you will see that old Ned was not very enthusiastic concerning the brilliancy of my intellect. Perhaps this was owing in some

measure to the fact that he could, if so disposed, shoot off the head of a crow at a few hundred feet, while I could scarcely hit a barn door at the same distance; a fact of which I was beginning to think the crows were aware, from the apparent contempt with which they regarded my presence as I sat night after night watching them.

"During my many conversations with the old hunter I found there were only two objects in nature which caused any animation in him. One was the 'wild bob-cat,' which he hated; the other the crow, which he seemed to hold in a sort of superstitious veneration—a feeling only equaled by that of the Zuñi Indians, in their worship of the cunning of the fox.

"Night after night I watched the crows, until at last it became certain that the old crow, with the stentorian lungs, was in absolute command and had his forces well under control. After about a week more of training, they began to show undoubted signs of excellent discipline. At the command of the leader, a flock of a dozen or more took wing and described a much larger circle than ever before. Until they were about two hundred feet from the rest, comparative silence reigned among the remaining host; but then, suddenly, came several loud, sharp tones from the leader, and about as many more left the trees. This time the new division separated into two equal bodies, and flew off at right angles for a short distance. Then, in response to another caw, they turned in the same direction as the advance-guard, who were now some distance away. After a few moments had elapsed, the word of command was again given, and all the crows arose in a body and followed the lead of the advance-guard, the old chieftain being well to the front; but I noticed that he did not fly so fast as the main body, and they gradually passed him. 'Now,' I thought, 'he may be the crow with the most acute brain, but he certainly lacks the strength of wing to keep to the front,'—for by this time he was among the stragglers bringing up the rear. But before long the air again resounded with the hoarse 'Caw! Caw!' and immediately the apparently abandoned trees sent forth a very creditable rear-guard. These last crows rose and scattered themselves into open skirmishing order.

"Then the General at once proved to me I had been very foolish in drawing hasty conclusions concerning his wing power, for he at once forged ahead, plowing his way rapidly, until he reached the main body and took a leading position. By this time the advance-guard had completed their circle and were fluttering round in smaller circles preparatory to alighting upon their old perches; but the vigilant eye of their leader detected this attempt, and a caw of command sent them forth to duty again. The old fellow was a perfect old martinet, so far as drill was concerned. Up to this time, he had taken things somewhat easily, as it had been only company drill; but now, it was the all-important battalion drill, and therefore there was no shirking allowed.

"The word to halt was soon given, however, and each detachment, perched upon its camping trees, awaited orders. As if it was perfectly understood that after drill they were to 'roost at ease,' a terrible cawing commenced. It seemed that each crow meant to let them all understand that he was the best-drilled bird in the brigade.

"You will perceive that by this time I had learned something, and, according to old Ned's remark, 'Things were interesting.' I became very curious to know more, but had to wait until the following evening. Next time there was another advance; for, when the regiment received the order to march, there was no sign of their halting in their flight; but, after scurrying around the circle once or twice, at a sign from the leader some of them left the main body and flew ahead till they reached the advance-guard and the right and left wings of scouts took their places. The birds then on duty slackened their flight and gradually rejoined the main body. The same thing was repeated by the rear-guard. It became evident that the General not only intended to guard his army, but also had arranged to relieve those who were sent out upon this special duty. In fact, no human general could have thought out all probable contingencies and prepared for them better than did this 'old black crow.'

"Next day, feeling encouraged by the 'pride that cometh by knowledge,' I reported to my neighbor what I knew about crows. For a mo-

ment there was a decided relaxation of his usual set expression as he soliloquized thus: 'Mebbe he 'll larn something yet!' Under these circumstances I felt encouraged to ask a question which had been puzzling me for some time.

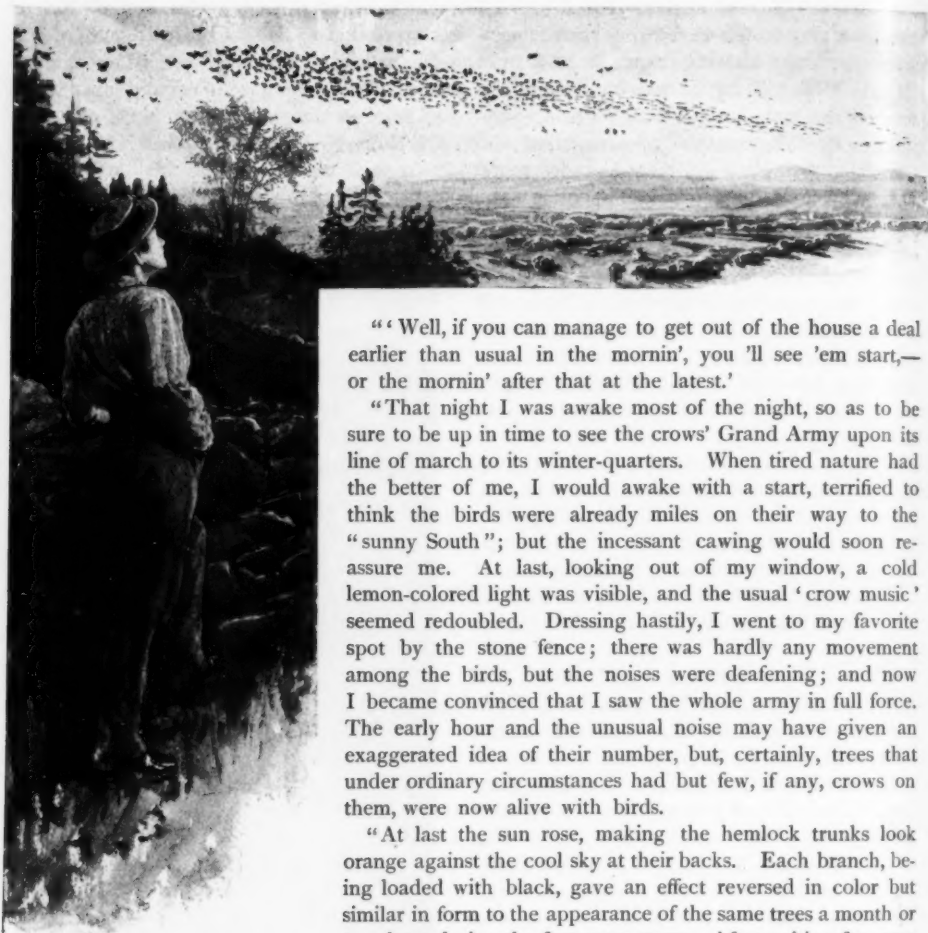
"'Now, Ned, when do you think they will finally start south?'



"The usual pause ensued; then he asked:

"'Did you say, boy, that the old chap was teaching them to take spells watching out for danger?'

"'Yes,' I replied; 'he certainly relieved guard last night.'



THE ARMY DEPARTS.

"Well, if you can manage to get out of the house a deal earlier than usual in the mornin', you 'll see 'em start,—or the mornin' after that at the latest."

"That night I was awake most of the night, so as to be sure to be up in time to see the crows' Grand Army upon its line of march to its winter-quarters. When tired nature had the better of me, I would awake with a start, terrified to think the birds were already miles on their way to the "sunny South"; but the incessant cawing would soon reassure me. At last, looking out of my window, a cold lemon-colored light was visible, and the usual 'crow music' seemed redoubled. Dressing hastily, I went to my favorite spot by the stone fence; there was hardly any movement among the birds, but the noises were deafening; and now I became convinced that I saw the whole army in full force. The early hour and the unusual noise may have given an exaggerated idea of their number, but, certainly, trees that under ordinary circumstances had but few, if any, crows on them, were now alive with birds.

"At last the sun rose, making the hemlock trunks look orange against the cool sky at their backs. Each branch, being loaded with black, gave an effect reversed in color but similar in form to the appearance of the same trees a month or two later during the first snow-storm. After waiting for some time, the voice of the General sounded forth the order to

march. The advance-guard at once arose with their usual 'Caw!' and then in silence started due south, flying on a horizontal plane only a few feet higher than the trees they had left. At the word, the other guards flew out as right and left wings, but maintaining the same height in the air as the pioneers;—in fact, all appeared as if moving along an invisible railroad track. As soon as the advance parties had taken their posts, the General gave the signal starting the main army in motion. There was now little or no noise other than that caused by the movement of their wings.

"In response to an order given by the leader at the head, and passed from one crow to another at irregular intervals along the line, the rear-guard took their position in a somewhat scattered and fan-like shape.

"I glanced down the hillside, and, some distance away, noticed a farmer directly in their line of march. He held something in his hand, but he was so far off it was difficult to tell whether it was a gun, a pitchfork, or merely a stick. I am inclined to think it was a gun, judging from the military precautions of the crows. One of the leading birds in the advance-guard gave a

sharp 'Caw!' and immediately rose several hundred feet higher. The warning was rapidly passed back, and the whole army rose up to the new line of flight. Here I noticed a difference between the tactics of soldiers and those of the crows. At the word of command the whole command of crows raised their grade of flight. In the volunteer regiment, to which I then belonged, we would have altered our line of march only as each company reached the point at which the first company had been ordered to change its course.

"After the crows passed over the object of their suspicion, a series of caws were given, but whether by the rear-guard, after they realized they were past the danger, or in response to the leader, the distance between us was too great for me to decide. Whichever it was, they all gradually settled down to the level they had taken when starting from the trees, and this

they kept until they became a gray cloud in the distance and then melted out of sight in the glowing southern sky.

"I faced toward the house, and was struck by the absolute silence and loneliness that had fallen on everything.

"It was with a hearty welcome I greeted the time-scarred face of Ned Greer, whom I saw approaching with his queer rambling gait.

"How far do you suppose those crows will travel to-day, Ned?' I asked.

"Mebbe fifty miles, more or less."

"As he started to walk away, the sense of loneliness again took possession of me, and I ran after him, feeling that I needed companionship more than my breakfast. 'What are you going to do next?' was my question. 'Well, it's time to attend to the winter traps. I'm convinced that those crows know pretty well when winter's near.'"

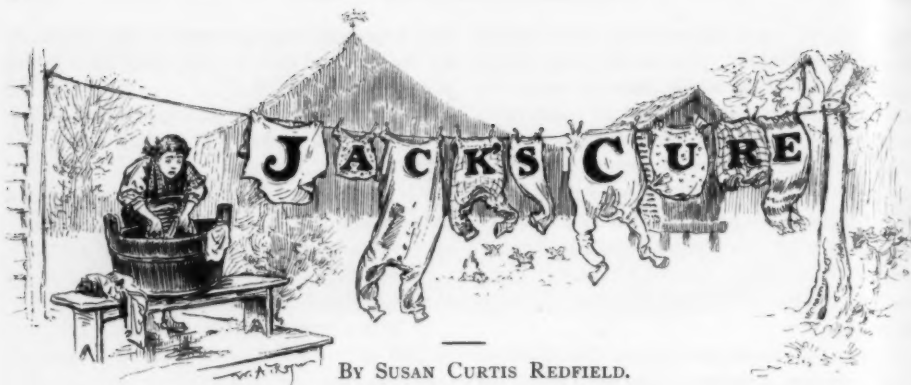


THE IMPERIOUS YAWN.

BY HENRY MOORE.

Two rosy lips each other press
And two deep dimples deeper make;
Two eyes, with struggling lids, confess
'Tis hard to keep themselves awake;
Two rosy lips more tightly drawn,—
The little lady *will not* yawn.

Two rosy lips that slowly yield,
And part, and meet, and part anew;
Two eyes, whose drooping lids are sealed
As flowers close when falls the dew;
Alas! her "will not" all is gone,—
The little lady needs *must* yawn.



BY SUSAN CURTIS REDFIELD.

JACK had no father nor mother. That 's bad to begin with, is n't it? Worse than that, he could not remember the time when he ever had any. His mother died when he was a tiny baby, and before he was two years old the father died, so he was left quite alone.

After the funeral, Uncle Hiram took Jack home with him, "to bring up with his girls," he said. Aunt Rachel opened her arms wide to receive the little child, and, as for the girls, there was never a king who had a more willing and adoring court than Jack had in these same girls.

Very soon Jack began to imagine that he was a wonderful being, and by the time he was five years old he was fully convinced that there never was such a boy. There was perfect harmony between the family and little Jack, because they all felt that nothing was too much to do for him, and Jack felt just so himself.

Uncle Hiram was rather an irritable man, but he had a warm heart, and there was a very soft spot there for his sister's boy. "I can't refuse that boy anything," he often said. "That 's Emily's smile, and those eyes too are Emily's." Dear Aunt Rachel never refused anybody anything.

When Jack was eight years old, he was sent to school. To his surprise he found that the teacher did not pay him any unusual respect, and that the boys behaved as if they thought they were as good as he. In fact, some of them talked as if they even dared to consider themselves a little better; and before the week was over Jack heard himself called "Stuffy,"

"Dude," or "the Roberts girls' doll-baby," in the most familiar manner. Before he had been in the school two weeks, he had actually been flogged.

However, he was not a stupid boy, and he soon found out that he must alter his conduct at school if he wished to escape punishment and nicknames. "You see, Stuffy, this sort of thing won't go down with us boys," said Bob King, a boy twelve years old, and very much revered by the small boys. "Just keep those airs for Aunt Rachel and the girls." And that is just what Jack did do. He really lived the life of two boys, the school boy and the home boy, and you cannot imagine how different those two boys were. The school boy was a jolly, active boy, always ready for a game of ball or a running match, and willing also to take his share of any work among the boys. He learned his lessons pretty well, and kept out of scrapes about as well as most of the boys. He was respectful to his teacher, and it never seemed to occur to him to dispute his authority or question the propriety of his orders.

The home boy was a good-natured boy, too, as long as there was no interference with his plans or pleasures; but he was always tired; too tired to bring in an armful of kindling for Aunt Rachel, or to go after the milk for Cousin Alice. If Uncle Hiram sent him out to cut the strawberry runners, he was soon seized with such a terrible pain in his back that he could hardly walk to the house. "I presume the boy is tired," tender-hearted Aunt Rachel would say; "he has been studying hard all day. I am afraid

he will never be very strong. Poor Emily was never able to work hard." Now Jack did not look at all delicate, for he had a stout pair of arms and very sturdy legs. His shoulders were broad, and his cheeks were hard and red, and there was n't a boy in the school who could run so fast.

But these kind people could see no fault in their boy. The warmest corner in the room was for Jack, because he was out in the cold so much. The largest piece of pie and the piece of pudding that boasted the most raisins fell to Jack, because he was growing so fast; and so it went on till Jack was fourteen years old.

Then something happened. Uncle Hiram woke up one day, rubbed his eyes hard, shook himself a little to be sure that he was awake, and then sat down to think and to wonder how he could have slept so long, and have had such strange dreams. He was still sitting by the stove thinking, when Jack came in from school. One idea had taken firm possession of his mind, and that was that he had thoroughly spoiled Emily's boy, and that he must undo the mischief he had done, without a moment's delay.

"Jack," he said, rather sharply, "go out and chop some kindlings."

Jack was neither surprised nor alarmed at the sharpness of the tone. Uncle Hiram was expected to be a little cross when he had rheumatism. So he tossed his books upon the table, and answered carelessly:

"Oh, I can't to-night! I promised to meet some fellows down here at Stoney—"

"You won't meet any fellows, anywhere," interrupted Uncle Hiram, raising his voice, "until you've chopped that wood." Jack began to open his eyes a little, but he soon recovered from his surprise and began to make fresh objections. "Now, see here," said Uncle Hiram, rising from his chair, "I'll have no more of this; there are to be no loafers around my place. Go straight out to the shed and chop that wood."

Jack went, but he slammed the door after him. Uncle Hiram sat down again, feeling a little queer. He was very sure that he had done his duty, and yet—Ah, Uncle Hiram, you can never undo the work of twelve years in this way!

From that day there was trouble enough in the old house. Uncle Hiram was firm in his resolve to reform Jack, and was as exacting as he had been indulgent. Nobody was happy, and probably he suffered more than any one else, for he knew that something was not right. He lay awake many a night grieving over the sharp, hasty words he had spoken to the boy, and resolving that he would be wiser and more patient on the morrow. But each day seemed to impress him more thoroughly with a sense of Jack's indolence and willfulness, and the troubled old man grew constantly more irritable, often magnifying Jack's offenses from his very anxiety over him. The young man himself highly resented the change, and soon became sullen and moody. He had so long been accustomed to do nothing at home that he disliked, and to take the best of everything as a matter of course, that he merely considered himself very ill-used now that he was requested to alter his habits. He therefore did simply what he dared not refuse to do, and did it most ungraciously. Aunt Rachel and the girls endeavored in a hundred little ways to make up for Uncle Hiram's harshness, and although not a word was said Jack felt that they were on his side. You see, everybody was making a mistake in his or her way.

One Saturday afternoon, Jack was weeding in the garden, brooding over his woes, and lamenting bitterly that so gifted a young person as himself should be doomed to weed in that old garden and dig potatoes. Just then half a dozen boys came rushing down the street, making as much commotion and raising as much dust as if they had been a troop of cavalry. "Hullo there, Jacky," shouted one of them, "come on, here 's a lark! Mr. Mayhew's colt has run away, and he has offered five dollars to any one who will bring it back safe and sound." Away ran the boys, and away ran Jack, dashing through the potato patch, and kicking over the basket of potatoes in his haste. There was more than one colt loose that Saturday afternoon. The boys did not find the missing animal, but a "lark" they certainly had.

But even boys tire out after a while, and visions of supper finally led their steps homeward.

Jack walked through the garden very slowly and quietly, noting that the basket of potatoes

had been picked up and that Aunt Rachel's flower-bed had been carefully weeded. He dreaded to go into the house. In the doorway stood his uncle. As Jack approached, he stepped outside, closing the door behind him. "I have a good mind not to let you into the house, sir," he said sternly. "You don't deserve your supper nor your night's lodging."

"I am afraid you have gone a little too far, Hiram," she said. "The boy has done wrong, I know; but what you said stung him wonderfully."

"Oh, nonsense,—never fear. He'll be back pretty soon," said Uncle Hiram, trying to speak carelessly. "A boy is not likely to run away without a cent in his pocket."

They delayed the supper until it was useless to wait any longer. Then they sat down, but no one ate much. After supper Uncle Hiram put on his coat and went out "to take a little stroll," he said. On one pretext or another, the anxious cousins visited all the houses where Jack was known to be intimate, but received no tidings of Jack. Not one of them hinted to any one that Jack could have run away. Ten o'clock came and eleven o'clock, but no Jack; and the Roberts family passed a sleepless night.

I will tell you now what sort of a night Jack passed. We left him walking rapidly through the principal street of the little town. In his first excitement, he walked straight ahead, on and on, scarcely knowing where he was going. After he had walked about five miles in this way he began to feel



DOROTHY BRINGS JACK HIS DINNER. (SEE PAGE 387.)

"Very well," answered Jack, "I'll not take them then"; and without another word he turned and walked away. "I'm not afraid that you will stay away long," called Uncle Hiram. "It is pretty near supper-time, and you have never learned to go without your supper, or earn one either." Jack did not look back, but walked steadily on out of the gate and down the street. His uncle stood watching him till he was out of sight; then he turned and went into the house. Aunt Rachel was sitting by the open window, looking pale and troubled.

very tired, and sat down on a large stone by the side of the road. He soon realized that he was also hungry, and resolved that he would ask for some supper and a night's lodging at the next farm-house. The miserable thought soon flashed upon him that he had no money with which to pay for such luxuries. Jack was forced to confess to himself that he had not run away in proper style. He had read thrilling tales of runaway boys, but he did not at the moment recall any boy who had been so indiscreet and short-sighted as to leave home with-

out a bundle of clothes and some money in his pocket.

Just then he heard the sound of wheels and of horses' hoofs, and, looking up, saw a pair of powerful horses, and then a large wagon, whose only occupant was a young man, much tanned and freckled.

"Where are you going?" Jack asked the man.

"I am going home."

"Where is home?" asked Jack, again.

"Mr. Andrews's farm, fifteen miles around the mountain. Do you want a ride?"

"Yes, I do," said Jack; and without further remark he jumped into the wagon. They left the main road very soon, and began slowly to wind around the mountain. The drive was charming, but Jack was in no mood to admire scenery. Fortunately for him his companion was not a loquacious individual, and so he was not annoyed by questions. The daylight soon faded away, and the evening crept on. By the time they reached the farm-house the moon was shining in her full glory, so that Jack could see his surroundings very plainly.

"I stop here," said the man.

"All right!" responded Jack, feeling that everything was all wrong for him. "I'm much obliged."

He jumped out of the wagon and started off very briskly, but he had no intention of going far.

As soon as he saw that the man had left his team and gone to the house, he made a grand run for the great barn, whose interior could be plainly seen in the moonlight.

"Here 's my only chance for the night," thought he to himself. "I must reach that barn before it is locked." (Town boys are sometimes a little ignorant regarding country ways, and Jack did not know that farmers seldom lock their barns.) He had just time to hide himself in the hay before the farmer's man came out of the house and prepared to unharness the horses. How Jack trembled! What if that man should need some of the hay, and drive a pitchfork into him! But he was not molested, and soon the great barn door was closed, and locked, as Jack supposed, and Jack was left to his own reflections. They were not pleasant.

"I am a tramp, that is just what I am," he exclaimed aloud, bitterly. "Here I am spending the night in a barn. Soon I shall be robbing hen-roosts and clothes-lines. What if the barn should take fire while I 'm locked up here? Tramps are always being burned in barns"; and Jack remembered with horror the poor fellow whom he had seen at the hospital. He made up his mind that he would stay awake all night to watch; instead of which, he went to sleep almost immediately and slept till morning. It was very bright when he awoke. At first he was greatly surprised to find himself in such a place, but all the misery of the evening before soon came back to him.

He crept stealthily down from the hay-mow, looking toward the door, which he saw was open. He saw no one in the yard, and made his way as quickly as possible to the open road. He felt weak and faint; scarcely able to walk; and remembered, then, that he had had no supper the night before, and was not likely to have any breakfast this morning, unless he begged for it. He soon decided that he must have something to eat, and turned his steps again toward the farm-house. As he approached the back door he saw a bright young girl, apparently about his own age, standing in the yard, evidently preparing to feed the chickens.

Jack stepped up to her with all the gallantry at his command, took off his hat, and then, I'm sorry to say, told the first lie he had ever told in his life.

"Good-morning," he said, very politely; "would you be good enough to give me a glass of milk? I have come a long way this morning."

"Yes," she replied, very gravely, "you must be very tired; it 's a long walk from our barn."

Jack grew very red, and turned as if to beat a hasty retreat.

"Don't be angry," she said, smiling at his confusion. "I'll give you a glass of milk, and some bread and butter, too; for you have not had any breakfast, and I don't believe you know where you are going to find any."

Jack could not deny the truth of her assertion, and the girl looked so pretty and good-natured that he thanked her and stood still. She went to the house and soon returned, bringing a large

bowl of milk, and a plate with two thick slices of bread and butter on it.

"Here," she said; "sit down on the doorstep, and eat this."

Jack did as he was told; and, while he was eating, the girl stood near him surveying him critically. Presently she asked coolly:

"What made you run away?"

"How do you know I 've run away?" retorted Jack, inclined to be provoked.

"Now, don't be so quick," said the girl coaxingly. "You're no tramp, you're too well dressed, and you're a gentleman." (Jack was pleased. Little Dorothy Andrews knew that that remark would be received with satisfaction.) "And young gentlemen are n't found sleeping in barns Sunday morning, unless something has gone wrong at home. I went into the barn myself this morning to see if my bantam hen had hidden her nest in the hay, and I found you instead of the hen."

Jack looked around rather nervously. Now Dorothy had quite a taste for adventure, and very little opportunity to gratify it in her quiet life on the farm. Here was a fully-fledged romance right at her very door. It was more exciting than any story she had ever read. What a handsome, polite boy he was, to be sure, and how pale and tired he looked!

"You need not be afraid," she said, noticing Jack's anxiety. "Father and Mother are still asleep, and Jonas has taken Don and gone for the cows. If you will not tell me why you ran away, perhaps you'll tell me what you're going to do. You might get sleepy or hungry again," she concluded mischievously, "and I might be able to help you a little."

"I don't know where I am going," said Jack; "and I wish I were dead!"

Dorothy's heart gave a little skip of delight. This was splendid! A bit of high tragedy, too! Her eyes sparkled with excitement and pleasure, and she prepared to play the part of the guardian angel.

"Oh! don't be so desperate," she exclaimed.

"There must be some one who'd feel very sad if you should harm yourself. Now, I've a plan. You can't go roaming around the country all Sunday. People will be so surprised, you know. You can't hire out to-day, if that's what you

mean to do; and everybody will ask you questions if you go tramping around."

"Papa wants a boy to do chores," she added, a little maliciously; "but he's very particular what sort of a boy he hires. He always asks for a recommendation. I'm afraid you would n't do."

"What is your plan?" inquired Jack, a little gruffly.

"I'll hide you in the barn until to-morrow morning, and I'll bring your food to you; but you must be off early to-morrow morning, just as soon as I've given you your breakfast."

This was too humiliating! To be tucked away in a barn over Sunday, and have his rations brought to him by this saucy young country girl, who was evidently having infinite amusement out of the incident, was rather more than Jack's pride could bear.

"I won't do it," he exclaimed, flushing up. "I'll starve first and sleep in the street."

"Oh, very well," she replied, tossing her little head; "just as you please. But there's Jonas coming up the lane with the cows. I hear Mamma coming down the back stairs, and if she catches me here, talking with a strange boy on the doorstep, I shall have an awful scolding. I never ought to have spoken to you at all. It was very wrong. Mamma will be so displeased. Oh, dear!" said Dorothy, clasping her hands in genuine distress. Jack gave a quick look around.

"That kind little girl shall have no scolding on my account," thought he.

His only way of escape was the barn; and into it he dashed about as furiously as he had the night before, running up the stairs two steps at a time, and never stopping until he had reached the tip-top of the hay-mow. There he sat, directly under the roof, in a dripping perspiration, the thistles pricking his legs and hands.

"This is fine!" ejaculated Jack. "What would the fellows say?"

He soon made the interesting discovery that two large spiders were swinging themselves down from their homes in the roof, directly in front of his face; and, seizing a handful of hay, he made a ferocious attack upon all the spiders within his reach.

But this occupation did not last long, and it seemed to him that he had sat there many hours, when he heard some one enter the barn. Jack's heart stood still. But there was no occasion for his terror. It was only Jonas, preparing to harness the horses to the old-fashioned carriage, in which the Andrews family always rode to church. Soon he heard them drive away, and, strangely enough, felt more desolate and unhappy than before.

Here was a chance for escape; but after Jack had again taken up his quarters in the barn, it apparently never once occurred to him that he could do anything but remain there until morning, as Dorothy had bidden. How different this Sunday morning was from all others Jack had ever known! He did not like to think of home and home friends, but he could not help doing it. Had they all gone to church without him? Would they tell that he had run away? Jack's face burned at the thought. It was not a very heroic thing to run away after all. And he began to feel an unexpected sense of shame, which increased as the morning wore away.

The hours were long ones, but two o'clock did come at last, and, soon after, the Andrews family. The next half hour was an anxious one to Jack, and he drew a long breath of relief when Jonas finished his work in the barn and left him with the horses.

Five minutes later he heard a light step on the stairs, and in an instant Dorothy's curly head appeared. She paused a moment when half-way up the stairs, and looked around for Jack.

"I'm up here," called Jack.

She started at the sound of his voice, and he heard the rattle of dishes. A queer little smile puckered her lips when she saw him, but she made no reply, nor did she advance another step, but raised her arms carefully and set a tray upon the floor. Then she ran away. Jack was not pleased.

"She might have spoken to a fellow anyhow. I have a good mind not to touch it," he said to himself. But he was a growing boy, with a famous appetite, which as yet had not been impaired by his trouble. He thought soon that he would just go and see what she had brought; and so he slipped down to the floor, and stepped

softly to the stairway. The sight of eggs, potatoes, bread and butter, and milk made him forget his resolution, and he ate until there was nothing left.

After his dinner, he walked very softly back and forth for a long time in the great barn, for his legs were stiff and cramped from sitting still so long. Long before the walk was ended he had owned to himself that he had been very unfaithful the day before, and he could not wonder that Uncle Hiram was displeased. He remembered, too, how many times he had neglected other light tasks set for him, and how unpleasantly he had often answered his uncle. He saw that he had done a silly and even wicked thing in running away, for he well imagined the distress at home. He was almost ready to return to the kind people who had watched over him ever since he could remember anything. But Uncle Hiram's last mocking words still stung him, and he said to himself that he would not go home until he could prove to his uncle that he could earn a supper, or go without one, if necessary.

Tired out at last, he crept again into the hay and cried himself to sleep. Dorothy came and took away the tray, leaving a bowl of milk and a plate of crackers in its place; but he did not awake. The old barn grew dark, and then bright again with moonlight, but he slept on, forgetting all his troubles in pleasant dreams of home and school.

He awoke with a start, and sat up, rubbing his eyes. Ah! this was not home, and he should not go to school to-day. But Jack did not know that he was, even then, in the very best school he had ever attended, and that he was learning the most valuable lessons of his life. He sat quite still for a few minutes, seemingly undecided just what to do; then, sliding down to the floor, he went toward the stairway which he could see dimly in the gray morning light. There he found the milk and crackers that Dorothy had placed there while he slept. The milk was still sweet, and he drank it all, putting the crackers in his pockets. Then he went down the stairs, and out of the barn. There was no one awake yet. But the dog, which Jack had not seen before, began to bark furiously at sight of the stranger, and started toward him,

obliging that young gentleman to make his way to the open road in a very undignified manner.

Dorothy, who was aroused from sleep by the dog's barking, suspected at once the cause of the disturbance, jumped out of her bed in great fright, and ran to the window.

"Oh, dear!" she thought; "why did not that dreadful boy do as he was told, and wait till after breakfast? Don will bite him now, and it will be all my fault."

The truth was that Dorothy had spent a very uncomfortable Sunday. She had never had a secret before, and she did not know what disagreeable things they are. She was well aware that both her father and mother would be seriously displeased to learn that she had lodged an unknown boy in the barn; and her guilty conscience made her so unhappy that she longed to tell her mother all about it. But she concluded that would be very dishonorable to Jack, as she had promised him safe-keeping and food. She could think of nothing during church and Sunday-school but that dreadful boy in the barn.

"How silly I was," she thought to herself. "I wish he'd go away before we get home! I'm sure, I never wish to see him again. I'll keep my promise, but I'll not speak another word to him."

Dorothy grew so melancholy and irritable toward evening that her mother was seriously alarmed.

"I believe your liver is all out of order," she said. "Come here to the window, child, and let me look at the whites of your eyes, and see whether they're yellow." Dorothy obeyed. Mrs. Andrews decided that the whites of Dorothy's eyes were yellow, and that she was very feverish; therefore she began to bustle about and make preparations for Dorothy's immediate relief. She soaked her feet in hot water and mustard; put horse-radish leaves over the spot where she supposed Dorothy's liver to be; gave her a bowlful of steaming boneset to drink; and tucked her up in bed at exactly seven o'clock. "There," she said, as she piled the blankets on poor Dorothy, "I guess you'll have a good sweat now, and that will do you more good than all the doctor's stuff. I dare say you'll be all right in the morning."

As soon as her mother had left the room,

Dorothy began to cry. "This is just horrid," she sobbed. "I was never so nearly melted in my life. It is n't my liver, at all. It's just because I deceived Papa and Mamma. I'll never again care for anything romantic as long as I live."

She did not cry long, however, for her mother's energetic treatment had the effect of making her very sleepy, and soon she was slumbering as quietly as if she had passed the most commonplace day possible, being conscious of nothing until she was startled by Don's furious barking in the yard. By the time she reached the little window, Jack was already running up the road, and she crept back to bed again with a sigh of relief.

After breakfast, Dorothy told her mother all about it. Mrs. Andrews's consternation was great; but Dorothy was so penitent that she could not be very severe with her, and contented herself with bringing to her daughter's mind all sorts of possible and impossible things that might have happened, and admonishing her never to do such a thing again.

We left Jack running away from the dog. This was by no means his only unpleasant experience during the morning. He asked for work at several of the farm-houses, but every one looked at him suspiciously, and told him that no extra help was needed then.

At two o'clock in the afternoon he reached a small, rather shabby house. It was the least inviting of all the houses he had seen, but Jack was so tired and discouraged that he was no longer very particular. Near the house stood the barn, and there he saw a man trying to teach a calf to drink from a pail. He went up to him and asked again for work.

"Why, no," responded the man, pausing in his work and looking him well over; "I don't want any more help, and I don't believe you are used to farm work any way. Do you know how to milk?"

Jack was obliged to confess that he did not.

"I'll be bound you don't," returned the man.

Jack's heart grew very heavy, but at the same time a strange boldness came over him.

"I must have work," he said desperately. "Do let me do something here. I'm almost

starved. I have n't any place to sleep, and I'm miles and miles away from home."

"Well, now," ejaculated the farmer, "that's too bad! But I don't know as I'm bound to keep you, for all that. If you were only a girl now, we might let you stay for a while, for my wife's about sick, and wants some help."

"Do let me stay," pleaded Jack; "I'll do anything."

"Come along with me then," he said, turning the calf into a little stall and fastening it in.

He led the way to the house, and Jack followed.

On entering the kitchen, Jack saw the farmer's wife hard at work over the wash-tub. In the middle of the room was a cradle with a baby in it.

"I've brought you a girl," said the man to his wife.

The woman, who had a coarse and rather ill-natured face, stared a moment, and then burst into a loud laugh. Jack's blood boiled; but he had agreed to "do anything." So he said nothing, and he soon found himself installed as maid-of-all-work. He was to have nothing but his lodging and board until he had proved his usefulness.

"Now," said Mrs. Butler, "just take your coat off and wring out those clothes for me."

Jack looked at the wash-tub with horror.

"I don't know how," he answered feebly.

Mrs. Butler proceeded to show him with more energy than could have been expected of a woman in delicate health.

Jack went to work and did his best; but he was a boy, and this was his first washing. He splashed the water in every direction, dropped one end of a sheet on the floor while he was wringing out the other end, and brought upon himself serious trouble by tossing the sheet into the baby's cradle instead of into the large clothes-basket. For a whole hour did Mrs. Butler shout directions and warnings, but in vain. Just as the last garment was wrung out, Jack outdid himself by pushing the tub off from the bench on which it stood. Mrs. Butler caught up the baby, and Jack seized the basket of clothes and ran out into the yard with it, feeling that no more terrible calamity could befall him than to be obliged to wring out all those

clothes again. He found a box of clothes-pins in the yard and hung the clothes upon the line.

When he returned to the house he was ordered in no gentle tones to sweep the water out into the yard, and then to take a pail and mop and see what he could do to dry the floor. Jack made up his mind that he would rather wring out clothes again, when he understood that he must wring out that dreadful mop as fast as it soaked up the water. Then he had to blacken the stove, hot as it was, and after that was done, it was time to wash the potatoes and put them on to boil. Of course he put them over in Mrs. Butler's preserving kettle, and let the water boil out, so that the bottom of the kettle was burned as well as the potatoes. Poor Jack! This was new work indeed, and little suited to his taste. Although he had eaten nothing since his early breakfast in the barn, he was too completely tired out to have much appetite for the supper of boiled potatoes and bread and milk. As for Mrs. Butler, she declared that she was never so "wore out" in her life, and that she would rather have no help at all, than such help as that stupid boy, who could not learn anything. Jack was glad when the meal was over, for Mr. Butler and his man made themselves quite merry at his expense, and seemed to enjoy his discomfiture.

However, fresh trials awaited him, for there were dishes to be washed and a great many milk-pails and pans, too; and so Jack's hands were soon in the dish-pan.

"It must be an awful thing to be a girl all the time," said he to himself, shuddering inwardly as he felt the bits of bread and potato floating about in the greasy dish-water. "How glad I am that I was born a boy." He had always supposed that women and girls had an easy time, and had often said rather contemptuously to his cousins, "You don't do much. Men do all the hard work in the world."

So you see it was not a bad thing for Jack to learn something of the homely tasks which fill the lives of many patient women. This experience in housework gave him a wholesome respect for many things and many people, and he was a better man for it all his life.

Well, awkward as he was, the dishes were at last all put away in the pantry, and there was a

row of shining tin pails and pans on the shelf behind the stove, so that he could go to the room over the kitchen, to which Mrs. Butler directed him. It was not an inviting sleeping apartment. The air in Mr. Andrews's barn would have been far purer than in this little hot room filled with the odors from the kitchen. The clean, sweet hay, too, would have made a much softer resting-place for his aching limbs than he was likely to find here.

"Nothing is clean," he said, with disgust, holding up the lamp and looking around him.

However, it is usually considered more respectable to sleep in a house than in a barn, especially when one has honorably earned the right to a night's lodging there. Jack fully appreciated this fact, and being, after all, too much exhausted by the experiences of the day to pay great heed to his surroundings, threw himself on the outside of the bed, and was soon fast asleep.

The sharp voice of Mrs. Butler aroused him at an early hour the next morning, and he hurried down stairs. Before he was fairly in the kitchen, Mrs. Butler spied him and thrust a huge piece of salt pork and a knife into his hands, telling him to cut off a dozen slices and fry them in the spider.

"Please, can't I wash my face and hands somewhere?" inquired Jack, meekly. "And I am very sorry, but I don't know what you mean by a spider."

Mrs. Butler's only answer was to take the pork and knife from his hands, and point toward the shed. Jack knew that he should find there the old basin and soiled towel which had been there yesterday, and it seemed to him that he could never use either one again. But he did not know what else to do; so he went to the shed, and followed the example set him by the farmer's man who was there before him. On his return to the house, work began in earnest, and continued all through the week. He swept, dusted, washed dishes, churned, made beds, even ironed some clothes, and helped make bread,—in fact, did everything but sew. When there was nothing else on hand, he was called upon to take care of the baby. He walked up and down the road, carrying the child in his arms, because Mrs. Butler said he was teething and

needed not only fresh air but the exercise which the walk would give him. Little Josiah entertained himself by testing the strength of his hands on Jack's straw hat, and when Jack remonstrated, pulled Jack's hair, and poked his dirty, sticky fingers into Jack's eyes instead. If Jack still ventured to interfere with his amusement, he screamed at the top of his lungs, pummeling Jack with his fists, and kicking and writhing so it was almost impossible to hold him.

"Oh, dear!" moaned Jack, "I don't wonder that women in India throw their babies into the Ganges, if they act like this!"

Fortunately for Jack, Josiah's screams usually brought Mrs. Butler upon the scene. She always surveyed Jack with an air of grave suspicion on these occasions, taking the baby and examining him very carefully. Jack was sure that she expected to discover that he had been sticking pins into the baby or pinching him.

All of these things were disagreeable enough; but as the week drew to its close, and Sunday came, one question fairly haunted Jack. Would Mrs. Butler make him do the washing on Monday? Sunday evening she went about picking up the soiled clothes and throwing them into a large tub of warm suds, and she said not a word about the washing. But at five o'clock the next morning, Mrs. Butler called:

"Come, Jack, it 's Monday morning, you know, and you must get a good start with your washing."

Jack went downstairs very slowly, rolling up his shirt-sleeves as he went. "I declare," he exclaimed aloud, as he stood looking at the tub, "if that water were n't so dirty, I'd just jump in and drown myself."

Mrs. Butler soon appeared and initiated him into all the horrible mysteries of the wash-board and pounding-barrel. By nine o'clock, Jack had set his first boilerful of clothes on the stove. There he stood, stirring up the clothes with an old broomstick, when he was startled by a familiar voice saying:

"Our harness has given way. Can some one give my husband a little help?" and looking up, he saw his old friend Mrs. Mayhew standing in the doorway. She recognized Jack immediately, and came toward him, saying,

"Good-morning, Jack. I'm glad to see you." Doubtless, Mrs. Mayhew was both surprised and amused, but her face did not betray it. Turning again to Mrs. Butler she asked if she could spare Jack for a few moments. That lady consented rather ungraciously, and Jack wiped his dripping hands, and followed Mrs. Mayhew out to the road, where Mr. Mayhew stood with his horses and democrat wagon. He stared a minute at Jack, and then broke out into a series of disjointed and incoherent exclamations:

"Why, Jack Roberts! I declare, I did n't know you! Where on earth—! You don't mean that—! What are you fixed up in such extraordinary style for? Don't let my team of colts get a glimpse of you, for they'll run if they do!"

Jack needed no such remarks to remind him of the deficiencies of his toilet. He hastily pulled down his shirt-sleeves, and they fell over his hands to his very finger-tips. Mr. Mayhew laughed outright. He had not so much tact as had his little wife. In his embarrassment Jack dropped his eyes, and they rested on Mrs. Butler's checked apron and on his bare feet and legs. Poor Jack! The truth was that his shirt and stockings were in the wash. Mrs. Butler had given him her husband's old red flannel shirt to put on, and as Mr. Butler was a large, long-limbed man, it could hardly be called a good fit for him. As a means of protecting his only pair of trousers, he had consented to Mrs. Butler's proposal that he should put on one of her aprons, and, in his haste and confusion, he had forgotten to remove it. His shame was so great that he could not speak. Mrs. Mayhew answered for him.

"Jack is working on this farm, and he is dressed for his work just as one should be when one has dirty work to do."

"I did n't mean to hurt your feelings," said Mr. Mayhew kindly. "I supposed you were up to some fun or other. Never mind your looks, just see if you can't find me a piece of rope."

Jack was sure that there was some in the barn, and started off, glad of any chance of escape. Mrs. Mayhew followed him.

"Jack," she said anxiously, "tell me what all this means. Something must be wrong. Have you had any trouble at home?"

Jack hesitated.

"Do tell me all about it," pleaded Mrs. Mayhew. "I am sure that you need a friend, Jack."

Jack knew well enough that he did, and in a few moments he had told Mrs. Mayhew all about it.

When he had finished his story, the kind-hearted woman came close to him and laid her hand on his shoulder, looking into his face with eyes filled with tears.

"Jack," she began, "I had a boy once; he is not living now. When he was about your age, God took him. For the sake of that boy I must talk to you a little; and for the sake of the mother whom you never knew, and the dear aunt who is breaking her heart over you, you must listen to me."

"Now I'm going to catch it," thought Jack; "but I won't cry, any way."

"I remember well when your uncle brought you to his house. You were a mere baby, only two years old, and you were of course a great care" (Jack thought of Josiah); "but none of the family ever considered that. When the weather was very hot, Uncle Hiram often sat up half the night to fan you; and when you were ill, he and Aunt Rachel watched over you night and day, unwilling to trust you to any other care. No child was ever more tenderly cherished and cared for than you were. Oh, you don't know! You don't understand! Why, Jack, the devotion of that family to you has been something wonderful! Everybody and everything has revolved around you, and every thought has been for you. You will never know the sacrifices they have made so that you might have the best of everything. Aunt Rachel and the girls have done all the work at home, and have been glad to wear old wraps and old bonnets so that you might be sent to a private school. You have heard your Cousin Maggie talk about teaching next year, but perhaps you don't know that it is because she wishes to earn money for you. And perhaps you never knew why Uncle Hiram decided not to take his trip West last winter. How is that, Jack?"

Jack did n't know.

"Then I am going to tell you how it was. I know, because Aunt Rachel told me. You re-

member the delightful drawing-lessons with Professor Herman last winter?"

Yes, Jack remembered them well; for he had never enjoyed anything half as much as those hours with Professor Herman.

"Well, Jack, your uncle could not afford the trip West and the lessons too, so the dear old man gave up his plans without a murmur, and took as much delight in those lessons as you did. How proud he is of every picture you drew! He thinks you will make a great artist some day. Now, dear boy, we are all very human, and I dare say that Uncle Hiram may have made some mistakes with you, but have you made none yourself? Has he ever asked anything unreasonable of you?"

Jack was forced to admit that Uncle Hiram never had.

"And have you always been obedient and helpful to him?—or have you deserved some rebuke sometimes?"

Jack's conscience was at work, and the knowledge of his uncle's sacrifice for him had touched his heart. The tears kept coming to his eyes in spite of all his resolutions, and, as his only handkerchief was in the wash-tub, too, he had to wipe his eyes on the sleeve of the old flannel shirt.

"Mrs. Mayhew," he said at last, "I have not treated Uncle Hiram right, and I am sorry and ashamed."

Mrs. Mayhew's face was radiant.

"I knew you were made of the right material," she said. "And now, Jack, you must go home. Nobody knows that you have run away. Your uncle's family have only said that you were away for a few days, and that they expected you home soon. How they must have looked and watched for you! Oh, Jack! How could you run away from such love, and how could you stay away so long? But you will go back to them to-morrow with us. We drove over to Mr. Andrews's, Saturday, to spend a day or two. Do you know where he lives?"

Jack rather thought he did.

"Well, you must manage to meet us there to-morrow morning by nine o'clock."

"I am not fit to ride with you," said Jack; "my clothes are all used up."

"Never mind your clothes," replied Mrs.

Mayhew. "Find that rope for my husband, and hurry back to him."

If Mr. Mayhew had at first exhibited a lack of tact on this occasion, he was certainly making all possible compensation for his shortcomings by the extraordinary patience with which he stood in the dusty road holding his restless horses. He guessed pretty well what was passing between his wife and Jack, and would willingly have waited much longer, if it had been necessary. The rope was found and brought to him at last, and as soon as the harness was securely tied he drove away with his wife.

"Mrs. Mayhew," called Jack, "if you please, I would rather meet you a little beyond Mr. Andrews's house."

"Very well," she said.

Then he returned to the kitchen and to the wash-tub, rubbing and pounding and wringing with such energy that Mrs. Butler was surprised when his work was done. He did not know that it is expected that girls will "give warning" when contemplating a change of residence, and so he said nothing of his plans to Mrs. Butler until he was going to bed. She was very much offended, and talked very volubly on the folly of trying to benefit ungrateful young people.

Jack slept little that night, and arose very early in the morning. He smoothed out his shirt as well as he could with his hands, but he was not proud of his appearance after he was dressed. Josiah had made such a wreck of his hat that little was left of it but the crown.

As he was going through the kitchen Mr. Butler called to him and spoke very kindly, telling him to eat something before starting.

"I knew you had run away," he said, "and I am glad you are going home. I ran away once myself, and by the time I got home I had n't any father there."

Jack felt very sober as he stood in the doorway eating some bread and butter; but he was very thankful that he was going home to no such sorrow. When he had finished his simple meal he shook hands with Mr. Butler and started to meet Mr. and Mrs. Mayhew.

The ten miles of road were the same over which he had passed only a week ago, but how different were his thoughts! He was so completely absorbed with them, that he was sur-

prised when he caught sight of Mr. Andrews's house.

As he was hastening by the familiar place, congratulating himself that there was no one in sight, the stillness was suddenly broken by

"I am sorry to be late," he exclaimed, quite out of breath, as he came running up to them.

"No matter," answered Mr. Mayhew cheerily; "jump in, and then I'll show you how my colts can trot."



"LOOKING UP, JACK SAW HIS OLD FRIEND MRS. MAYHEW."

a fresh young voice, which sang with great energy and emphasis the refrain:

"Home, home, sweet, sweet home!
Be it ever so humble,
There's no place like home,
There's no-o place like home!"

Looking up, Jack saw Dorothy's mischievous face at the window of her little room. She laughed and disappeared from view at once; but she continued to sing "Home, sweet home," persistently, as long as Jack could be seen.

He soon forgot this annoyance in real dismay at seeing his friends waiting for him, a little farther on, under the shade of a great elm.

Jack obeyed; and off they went, homeward bound. But the boy was not the lively, talkative Jack that Mr. and Mrs. Mayhew had known; for his thoughts were not all happy ones yet. He was going home, but not with flying colors. He felt that he was no hero, and that he had covered himself with anything but glory. As they drew near the town he looked down at his torn, soiled clothes, and wished that he could creep under the seat.

"Cheer up, Jack," said Mrs. Mayhew, seeing his trouble; "no one will notice your clothes."

He began to prepare little speeches which should express in dignified terms his sense of

unworthiness, and desire for his uncle's forgiveness, but found some difficulty in putting his thoughts into words.

When the horses stopped in front of the dear old house his heart beat very fast, and he said "good-bye" to his kind friends with a very husky, uncertain voice. He hurried up the

He could only hold Uncle Hiram's hand, and sob out in broken words his sorrow over the past, and his purpose to be a better boy in the future.

"Dear boy," said Uncle Hiram tenderly, "we have all made some mistakes, and, with God's help, we are all going to do better."

At that moment the door burst open, and in rushed Nellie and Kate. Some one had told them that Jack had come, and they had run all the way home from school. Then everybody talked and laughed and cried at once for a whole hour. Maggie's pet chickens walked into the kitchen, making themselves very much at home there, and indulging freely in clucks of delight; but the excited family neither saw nor heard them. The potatoes and corn-bread burned up in the oven, and the gravy boiled out of the spider in which the sliced mutton was warming. The doughnuts which Maggie had left in the kettle whirled around faster and faster in the bubbling fat, but no one thought of them, and they were soon as black as the stove.

At last, the burning lard began to assert itself, and Maggie suddenly became conscious that the house was filling with smoke. "Oh, dear! My doughnuts are burning, and I forgot all about the dinner,"



JACK AMUSES LITTLE JOSIAH. (SEE PAGE 390.)

walk, stepped upon the little porch very softly, and stood for a moment looking through the window into the dining-room. The table was set for dinner, and Jack noted that there was a place there for him. Uncle Hiram lay on the sofa, with a newspaper over his head. He was asleep, for Jack could hear him snore. Just then, a door opposite the window was opened and Aunt Rachel came into the room. She gave a cry of joy; and in another moment Jack was in her arms, crying as if his heart would break. All this commotion awoke Uncle Hiram, and brought Alice and Maggie from the kitchen. Jack forgot all about the fine oration he had intended to deliver on this occasion.

she cried, running out through the china-closet into the kitchen. There was trouble enough! The chickens flew out of the kitchen with great cackling and flapping of wings, but too late; for Maggie saw, with dismay, that they had eaten off the top-crust from two fresh apple-pies which she had set to cool on the bench under the window. She caught the kettle and spider from the stove and ran with them into the wood-shed. Then she opened the oven door. It was too bad! Just when Jack had come and she would have been glad to have an especially good dinner. "Well, Jack," said Uncle Hiram dryly, as he stood with his hands in his pockets, looking at the blackened remains of the potatoes and johnny-

cake, "you will never have the chance to say that we killed the fatted calf for you. I really don't know as we are going to give you any dinner at all."

They all laughed at this, and every one was so happy that nothing mattered much. They ate a simple lunch with great contentment, and Aunt Rachel said they should celebrate with a fine supper that night.

Now, you must not think that the millennium

had come in that house, although there was more of heaven there than formerly. Jack was still very fond of his own way and of his own ease; but he fought perseveringly to overcome his selfish and indolent habits. Uncle Hiram still had rheumatism sometimes, and was not always perfectly reasonable, but he had learned some lessons as well as Jack.

And did Jack ever see Dorothy again?

Yes.

GEORGE AND NELLIE CUSTIS.

BY MARGARET J. PRESTON.

NELLIE CUSTIS.

ON the library mantelpiece, in the home of General Lee (in Lexington, Virginia), stand two tall and massive silver candlesticks, which have an historic association. They were the gift of Queen Anne to the young lieutenant, Daniel Parke, aide-de-camp to the Duke of Marlborough, and were presented to him on the occasion of his bringing to her the news of the victory of Blenheim. It was a great honor to be the bearer of that news, and five hundred pounds was usually the gift of the sovereign to such a messenger. Colonel Parke chose, instead, the Queen's miniature, which she gave him set in diamonds. Four pair of these unique candlesticks were also presented to him, and a full service of superb silver, so heavy that, as I tried to lift one of the salvers, it strained my hands.

This Daniel Parke was the ancestor of Nellie Custis, in whose baptismal name we find this one of the Duke of Marlborough's aide. A very fine full-length portrait of Colonel Parke, painted by Sir Godfrey Kneller, hangs in General Lee's drawing-room at Lexington. It was one of the historic canvases that so long adorned—first, the walls at Mount Vernon, and afterward, those of Arlington. Colonel Parke was a very handsome man, and his physical type has singularly stamped itself upon many of his descendants.

In a package of old papers we find the following letter from Colonel Parke to the young daughter who afterward married Colonel Custis,—the great-grandfather of George and Nellie Custis,—which it may be worth while to introduce here, as originally written:

ST. JAMES October ye 20th

1697

MY DEAR FANNY—

I Rec'd yr first letter, and be shure you be as good as yr word and mind yr writing and everything else you have learnt; and doe not learn to Romp, but behave yrselſe soberly and like A Gentlewoman. Mind Reading; and carry yrselſe so yt Everyboddy may Respect you. Be Calm and Obligeing to all the servants, and when you speak, doe it mildly Even to the poorest slave; if any of the Servants commit small faults yt are of no consequence, do you hide them. If you understand of any great faults they commit, acquaint yr mother, but doe not aggravate the fault. I am well, and have sent you everything you desired, and, please God I doe well, I shall see you ere long. Love yr sister and yr friends; be dutiful to yr mother. This, with my blessing is from yr lo: father,

DAN'L PARKE.

When George Washington, in 1759, married the beautiful widow, Mrs. Custis, who as Martha Dandridge had been the belle of Williamsburg, in the bright days when Governor Gooch maintained there almost a regal court, she had two children, John and Martha, who were adopted by Washington, and carried at once to Mount Vernon. Young Martha was a lovely girl,

and her stepfather doted on her as much as if she had been his own daughter. When she died at the age of sixteen, he flung himself upon her bed in an agony of grief, and for a long time utterly refused to be comforted. Her brother John—"Jacky," as Washington calls him in his letters—grew up at Mount Vernon, where his education was most carefully superintended by Washington himself. The boy was very fond of pleasure, and of all the gentlemanly sports of the day, and he used sometimes to vex his stepfather by his preferring them to his studies. Indeed, occasionally he would slip away from school and go on fox-hunts, much to the disapprobation of Washington. When he was only about eighteen he fell in love with Eleanor Calvert, a near relative of Lord Baltimore. She was little more than fifteen, and Washington very strenuously opposed



JOHN PARKE CUSTIS.
(FROM A MINIATURE IN POSSESSION
OF GENERAL G. W. C. LEE.)

the marriage. It was settled, however, that if he would remain for two years at King's College (now Columbia College, New York) consent would be given to his marriage. But love was not to be overruled. The young collegian would do nothing but scribble over the pages of his books the name of "Nellie Calvert." Between his mental eye, and the page over which he pretended to pore, ever intervened the lithe figure of Lord Baltimore's lovely ward, whose fresh beauty witched him away from everything like severe study. For a few months he bore the separation as well as he could; but finally confessed the truth, and was allowed to return to Mount Vernon, where he and Miss Calvert were married, in 1774.

After his marriage, although he was a minor, young Custis settled down into a valuable and earnest man. During the Revolutionary war

he was aide-de-camp to Washington, and rendered, on many occasions, very important service. While the American army lay before Yorktown he was seized with camp-fever, and died, to the intense grief of his foster-father, after a brief illness. So overwhelming, for a time, was the grief of the victor for the death of this stepson, that the general rejoicings that thrilled the land found no echo in his bosom.

Immediately on the death of their father, Washington adopted, in full legal form, the two younger children of his stepson,—Eleanor Parke Custis, and George Washington Parke Custis. "Nellie," as she was always called, was only two years and a half old when she became the child of Mount Vernon, and little George was a baby of six months. The wife of the steward at Mount Vernon was baby George's nurse, and for many a year, according to the custom of Southern children, he called her "Mammy." Nellie used to tell how she remembered running with "Mammy," when she was only three years old, to meet the General and Lady Washington, on their return from camp in a chariot drawn by six horses.

The little Nellie's life at Mount Vernon was a very happy one. She was kept strictly to her lessons, and Washington was very strenuous in having her give prompt attention to all her duties. But at the same time she was indulged with a great variety of pleasures. She had many young companions of her own age, who visited her at Mount Vernon, and she would often relate how considerate the General was in trying to make everything easy and pleasant for her visitors. He delighted in seeing young people happy, and would often remain in the drawing-room with the girls, in order that he might enjoy the sight of their pleasure. But finding that it was not easy for them to conquer their awe of the great man, before whom they could not indulge in gay chatter, he would withdraw, and leave them to their own devices.

There was no neglect of any kind of training, for in those old days children were not allowed the liberties and indulgences that our progressive times accord. The lessons given to the little Nellie were so long that the tender grandmamma would sometimes beg to have them shortened. The child was kept rigidly to

the rules of the school-room. Indeed, the education of the children was much in advance of that of most children of their day. Nellie early learned to write a beautiful hand, and I have now lying before me many of her letters, written with an elegance and freedom very unusual at that period. Our great-grandparents were a little shaky as to their spelling in those old times, but these letters, now dingy and worn with age, scarcely contain a word differing from the orthography of the present day.

Mount Vernon was the resort of all the distinguished men in the country; and no eminent foreigner came from abroad who did not go thither to pay his respects to the man who was even then placed high among the world's heroes. So from her earliest years the child was brought face to face with the most distinguished people in the land. The style of living at Mount Vernon was that of the landed aristocracy of England. General Washington and his wife each had a large fortune, and the hospitality of the mansion was unbounded. The family never sat down to dinner without some brilliant visitors, to whom, according to the English custom, the children were presented when they were brought in with the dessert. Of course all this gave an ease and an elegance to their manners which distinguished them both throughout life.

In one of his letters, Washington says: "I keep a hundred cows upon my estate, and yet still I am obliged to buy my butter." This will give some idea of the amount of company that was entertained at the hospitable home. Many a time when the whole country turned out for a fox-hunt, of which sport Washington was exceedingly fond, the entire company would dine and stay all night at Mount Vernon, which made it gay and delightful for Nellie.

She loved, in after years, to dwell upon the absolute harmony that always existed between her grandparents. She used to tell how she had often seen her grandmamma, when she had something to ask the General, break in upon him when his mind was entirely abstracted, and occupied by grave business; how she would run up to him, seize him by one of his buttons, and shake him to compel his attention; how he always would smile upon her in the most benignant manner, listen to whatever she had to say, and never

seem vexed by the intrusion. Nellie many a time tried to correct the impression that at home the General always wore his grave dignity; she would tell how she was accustomed to amuse him often by relating some gay prank of her own, over which he would laugh in the heartiest manner, like any common mortal.

Nellie was very gay-tempered, and possessed remarkable beauty, as her portrait, by Gilbert Stuart, which now hangs in General Lee's drawing-room, testifies. She had an exceeding vivacity of manner, was very witty, and possessed an amiability of character, and a bright cheerfulness which never deserted her to her latest day. This made her the darling of the Mount Vernon household, and her charming personality commended her to all its visitors.

As may be supposed, Nellie had a great many suitors, and among them some of the most brilliant men of the day. It was very natural that Washington should desire to bind the dear child, on whom he doted, by still closer ties. Accordingly, we find that when young Lawrence Lewis, his favorite nephew, the son of his beloved sister Elizabeth, came to reside at Mount Vernon as his private secretary, Washington favored the young man's suit for the hand of his foster-daughter. Nellie was beautiful, gay, had the world before her where to choose, and was, perhaps, like all belles, a little capricious. "Grandmamma" had some other plans for her; but no restraint was brought to bear upon the young girl. There is a long letter, preserved by her brother George, written to her by General Washington when she was only sixteen years of age, on the event of her first ball. It was full of wise and gentle advice to her on the matter of love and marriage, and he gives her a number of hints about avoiding coquetry, to which, perhaps, Nellie was a little inclined. He begs her not to let her impulses run away with her; but to be as reasonable in the matter of love as she was in everything else. He was evidently afraid that some of the gay wits of the day might deprive his dear Lawrence of the wife he intended for him.

Be that as it may, a singular occurrence, related to me by one of Nellie's great-nieces, precipitated the matter. "Nellie," she said, "had a great fancy for enacting the nurse when



NELLIE CUSTIS. (FROM A PAINTING BY GILBERT STUART, OWNED BY GENERAL G. W. C. LEE.)

there was anything the matter with the health of her friends." She was very fond of giving "powders," prescribing "lotions," and doing all she could, in the exceeding kindness of her heart, to restore them; for it will be remembered that, in those more primitive days, women were better domestic doctors than they are now, when every ache and pain has its professional specialist.

It so happened, one day, that the handsome young Lawrence, to whose persistent addresses she had never given as yet a very earnest attention, fell ill. He was living at Mount Vernon,

an inmate, with Nellie, of the family. What was more natural than that she should bring her medical skill to bear upon him? She accordingly prepared a powder, which was duly administered. What was her horror, and that of the family, to find, after it had been taken, that a mistake had been made, and that the drug given was a poison! Of course Nellie's agony was intense, and she probably discovered then, for the first time, how necessary this life had become to hers. In her remorse and grief, she vowed that if Lawrence recovered she would

marry him. Lawrence *did* recover, and in due time she became his wife.

The marriage was a very brilliant one. All the great people of the neighborhood, distinguished officers of the army, celebrities from abroad, and the Government officers of the new capital were present to grace the festivities, which took place on the 22d of February, Washington's birthday, at Mount Vernon. There was not a negro on the plantation that day who did not share in the joy of "Little Missy's wedding."

The young married pair lived, for a while, with the President; but finally took up their abode on an estate, belonging to the Lewis family, called "Woodlawn," which lay between Mount Vernon and Arlington. This was the home where most of Nellie Custis's long and happy life was passed. She devoted herself with noble assiduity, and with all a Virginia matron's

servants, to whom she was the best of mistresses; to the exercise of a vast hospitality, as well as to the education of her several children.

When she was still a comparatively young woman, she lost a lovely daughter, Agnes, whose death was a sore blow to her. There was put into my hands, very recently, a box containing many precious memorials of the lives of these two Custis children, from which these notes are mainly drawn. The letters are faded with age, and many of them worn almost to indistinctness. Among these papers, I find a copy of verses, written by Nellie Custis on the death of this beloved daughter. She wrote many verses in her young days, but, as she had no literary ambition, and wrote merely for her own pleasure and that of her friends, her poems have not been carefully preserved. This is the only one which I have been able to secure. It is before me in the original graceful handwriting of the bereaved mother:

TO THE MEMORY OF MY AGNES.

"WHY then do you grieve for me, mother?"—she cried,
As I painted the joys of the blest;
"Why then do *you* grieve, dearest child?"—I replied,
"Thou wilt go to a haven of rest."

For thee, my lost Angel, ev'n death had no sting,
And no terrors, the cold, silent grave;
Tho' Thy Maker recalled Thee, in life's early Spring,
He resumed but the blessing He gave.

Thy end was so peaceful,—so pure was thy life,
Could a wish now restore thee again,
'T were a sin to expose thee to perils and strife,—
To a world of temptation and pain.

I can not forget, tho' I do not repine,
That those eyes are now shrouded in death;
Which bent with the fondest affection on mine,
Till my darling resigned her last breath.

To adore Thy Creator in spirit and truth,
Submissive to bow to His will,
To the close of thy life from thy earliest youth,
Thou didst then these duties fulfill!

To thy favorite beech do I often repair,
And I kiss on its bark, thy dear name;
To meet thee in Heaven is ever my prayer,
And my last sigh shall murmur the same.

Here is an extract from a letter she wrote at this time to her brother George:



G. W. F. CUSTIS IN BOYHOOD.
(FROM A PAINTING OWNED BY GENERAL G. W. C. LEE.)

unselfishness, just as she had seen her grandmother do before her, to the burdensome duties of a plantation peopled with a large number of

. . . . I am resigned to the will of the Almighty, and hope that my child is eternally blessed. She was as much of an angel as any human being could be before death. If I could forget her sufferings I would feel more easy; but I always think I might have done more than I did. I wish to see my dearest Mary. My child often spoke of, and wished to see her. May she live to bless you, my dearest Mary, and when she does go hence, may her death be as tranquil as my darling's was at the last.

Nellie Custis was possessed of many accomplishments. She embroidered very beautifully, and was exceedingly fond of the art. I have now before me a bit of her needlework, done for Robert E. Lee, when he was a young man, recently married to her niece, Mary Custis, of Arlington. One of her great-nieces tells me that "Aunt Lewis's" witticisms, and clever sayings, and brilliant talk, and beautiful cheerfulness, and unbounded generosity have always been traditions in the family. She remembers being taken frequently, when a little child of four or five, with her sisters, to her home at "Wood-lawn"—visits which were considered the greatest treat of their lives. "Aunt Lewis was so loving," she said, "so gentle and bright, she made everything beautiful for us. She always had a store of little presents ready; and one of my earliest memories is being taken into one of her treasure-closets and treated to sweeties."

Some time before her death, she removed to "Audley," another family seat, which is now the home of one of her great-nephews. Here she died in 1851, aged seventy-four. Among the MSS., to which I have already referred, is a letter written by Mrs. G. W. P. Custis, of Arlington, to her daughter, Mrs. Robert E. Lee. I quote a sentence or two:

What an affectionate, inexpressibly kind sister and aunt we have lost, my daughter! I do not think in all our long intercourse she ever uttered a word to me that was not in the most perfect kindness; and a thousand kind acts evince still more.

Before me lie two pictures taken from miniatures of Nellie Custis, sent to me by one of her grandsons. One represents her as a young girl, just entering her teens, full of the sweet shyness and tender beauty characteristic of her in those early years, when the sparkle was in her eye, and the rose upon her cheek. The other

pictures her as she appeared in the matronly dignity of old age, when the winter snows of life had hidden the violets, and withered the rose-leaves of youth; but, even in this last presentment, one still discerns traces of that vivacity and gentleness and suavity that made her in her young years the pride and darling of Mount Vernon.

GEORGE CUSTIS.

THE "little George," of whom "Tutor Snow" speaks so affectionately in some of his brief reminiscences of the Mount Vernon life which have come down to us, was only six months old when adopted by Washington. His whole life, consequently, was passed at Mount Vernon (except the years he was at college), until, in his early manhood, he married, and established a home for himself at Arlington. "Tutor Snow" was interested in everything that affected the little grandson. We find him writing to a friend, and describing his young pupil's "fine black cloth coat, and his overalls"; and again he writes to know where a Latin grammar can be



G. W. P. CUSTIS AS A BOY AT MOUNT VERNON.
(FROM A MINIATURE IN POSSESSION OF GENERAL G. W. C. LEE.)

procured; for it is time, he thinks, "to set the boy down to his 'Gradus.'" It seems very odd to us in these days, when old Latin grammars go back to the paper-mills by the dray-load,

in order to be reduced to pulp again, to find the tutor of the grandson of the President of the United States making inquiries here and there, among his learned friends, for one by means of which to set his little pupil to work. Now the son of any poor laborer throughout the land can command any text-book he may want, for nothing, or for the merest nominal price.

Some time ago, a friend of mine, who had picked up a little half-starved, half-dressed negro boy, and had fed him for six months, until he became sleek and shiny, conceived the idea of making a little butler of him. She decked him out as a waiter, and he answered her purposes admirably, until one day he announced that he wished to go to school. She consented, on condition that he should always be in his place at her six o'clock dinner. After a brief time, however, the boy grew careless, and one day, at the time when plates were to be handed, he was not on call.

"How is this, John?" she asked; "I surely give you plenty of time for your lessons."

"No 'm," was the reply, "I has n't time; for you see I has botany, and geography, and mathematics, and I has to make up so much on my Latin grammar."

"You learning Latin!" exclaimed his mistress. "Why, that 's more than ever I did!"

"La!" answered John superciliously. "You was nothin' but a girl, and girls cyan't learn Latin nohow!"

The barefooted negro of to-day was better off for books than was this little heir of Mount Vernon, a hundred years ago!

"Master Washington," as he was always called, had, however, no great fondness for books in his early years, for there was everything around him to distract his attention, and fill his outdoor life with delight. The Mount Vernon house was always filled with company, in the midst of which Master Washington had his part to play. The retinue of servants was immense, and the little boy had his train of black followers and playmates. The estate consisted of fifteen thousand acres; it had splendid fisheries on the Potomac, was thoroughly stocked with deer, abounded in partridges, pheasants, and hare; and every fortnight there was a regu-

lar hunt, in which, as soon as he was old enough, the boy took part.

Mr. Custis gives an account, in his recollections of Washington at Mount Vernon, of a certain morning, when he was summoned by Washington to go out with the drivers and kill an old buck. He says: "I was charmed with the permission (as any boy would be), so long coveted, and I determined to follow as closely as possible my grandfather's orders: 'Recollect, sir, you are to fire with ball—to use no hounds—and on no account to kill any but an old buck.' We went to the haunt of one known as the patriarch of the herd, rousing him from his lair, while the woods echoed with the shouts of the huntsmen and the cries of the dogs; the old buck, crashing through the undergrowth, made for the waters of the Potomac—the huntsmen lustily laying about them to prevent the dogs from breaking up the wounded stag, who, after a gallant struggle, yielded up his life and was carried in triumph to the mansion house, there to await the master's inspection.

"Punctual as the hand of the clock the General arrived from his morning ride. I announced that a fine buck had been shot. 'Ah, well,' he replied, 'let 's see.' He examined the deer, and, observing his frosted front, he became convinced that his orders had been obeyed to the letter. The next day, guests having assembled, the haunch was served up in the dining-room at Mount Vernon. I have killed many a brave deer since those days, but none that have left an impression on my memory like that of the Washington stag, killed by Washington's special order, and served at his board at Mount Vernon. The antlers of this stag graced the great hall at Arlington for many a long year."

But it must not be supposed that Master Washington Custis was allowed to spend many days thus. When a mere boy he was sent to Princeton College, where, from all accounts, he acquitted himself in a gentlemanly manner, though at no time distinguished for great devotion to study. He preserved the correspondence which passed between him and his grandfather; and it is very interesting, on Washington's part being full of good fatherly advice, and on the part of young Custis, deferential, affectionate, and proper. The formal character of it some-

what amuses us now; but there is no boy in the land who might not be improved by reading the advice Washington gives to the young collegian. He strictly guards him against unnecessary expense, constantly bids him take good care of his health, and urges him to let nothing make him neglect his studies. Here is a sentence, which, for the benefit of some sophomore, I quote from one of the letters:

Another thing I would recommend to you,—not because I want to know how *you* spend your money,—and that is, to keep an account book, and enter therein every farthing of your receipts and expenditures. The doing of this will initiate you into a habit from which considerable advantages will result. From an early attention to a matter like this important and lasting benefits may follow.

Young Washington in one of his letters says:

The Fourth of July will be celebrated here with all possible magnificence; the college will be illuminated, and cannon fired; a ball will be held in the evening at the Tavern, which I shall not attend, as I do not consider it consistent with propriety.

Our young student was rather more of a stickler for "propriety," than the sophomores and juniors of the present day! Washington, in replying to him, says:

If it has been usual for the students of Nassau Hall to go to the balls on the anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, I see no reason why you should have avoided it, as no innocent amusement or reasonable expenditure will ever be withheld from you.

Young Custis afterward went to Annapolis to perfect himself in science and mathematics, and from the satisfaction expressed in Washington's letter, he seems to have made good use of his time while there.

After his return to Mount Vernon, he became a favorite visitor among all the families in the neighborhood. He was handsome in person, elegant in manner, well-read, and cultivated, the heir to a large fortune (especially the Arlington estate, opposite Washington, which came to him through his father, John Custis), and the pride and pet of the Mount Vernon home. It was not strange, therefore, he should make havoc among the hearts of the young belles around him. We accordingly soon find him, though not much more than a boy still, making love to a certain beautiful and accomplished girl residing on one

of the neighboring estates—Mary Lee Fitzhugh, of Ravensworth. Lying before me is the original of a letter addressed to this young lady. The paper is yellow with age, for it must have been written about the close of the century, and the ink so faded that it is scarcely legible. It looks as if it had been worn next the heart of the pretty maiden, so dim and dilapidated is it. We append some passages from the original love-letter, to show what sort of things these missives were almost a hundred years ago.

Saturday.

MY DEAR LOVE:

I congratulate you, my Love, on the return of your much respected Parent to the embraces of his Darling Child, and hope his presence will dispel the gloom which the late melancholy event has occasioned. How pleasant must be your fireside at this moment. How I long to be a partaker of its pleasures,—of the delights of rational converse, and social Harmony,—of being considered a Member of a family whose regard I shall always be proud to attain, and whose esteem I should always be happy to preserve. Say, my Mary, how would such an addition to the Circle appear? . . .

I have rode twenty miles to-day, and walked ten! You said you believed I was industrious. Yes, Girl, as stirring a fellow as you will find! One who takes about one hour's rest in the twelve, and who feels as much of the open air, winter and summer, as anybody. We won't starve, Molly, if I can help it, believe me! . . .

The fishing season is fast approaching; an awful time; I shall be able to tell you whether it was fair or foul at any time of the night you may wish to know. While your pretty peepers are fast closed, I shall be pacing the shore, with a lantern in one hand, and a piece of bread in the other, gazing upon the element which is to afford my profit. It is a turbulent life, and yet has its pleasures. We all sing, and are gay, tho' wet and sleepy. It agrees vastly with me. The only time I ever weighed 140 was immediately after a spell of this sort, when I had slept but three hours a night for some time, and occasionally not at all for several. Don't fear my Health; my carcass is proof against all weathers, and if my heart is light, and mind contented, I fear nothing. . . I am making great preparations, it is my last recourse; my other crops have all failed from the badness of the last season; this is the last card I have to play, and I'll take care to use it to the best advantage. Sitting, last night, and reflecting a little, I have arranged a plan for proceeding this summer. In a few days after the 15th of May, I shall set off for the White House, from thence to the Eastern Shore, a journey of 300 miles, and return about the last of July, make my speech on the 16th, and after that, while you are perambulating "over the Hill and far away," I can be finishing our House, and raising Chickens against your return. What think you of that for a plan, Molly? Then, when you return, I'll officiate as master of Ceremonies!

... Why did you not write to-day, Love? Last night I received your letter, and hasted from the extremity of my Estate to have the pleasure of answering it, altho' it required none. Oh, you Molly, if you knew what pleasure one word written by your sweet pretty hand (for, flattery aside, it is the handsomest I ever saw, and I have traveled and seen many), I say did you know what delight it gave me, you would send me one poor line more. I have written till my old pen will bear mending no longer; and I forgot to send for quills, so that I must stop in my own defense.

My Mary, In the world you live in, you are deserving of esteem. In the world to come, May Beneficent Heaven acknowledge Your worth, and reward your merits.

Adieu,

GEORGE W. P. CUSTIS.

MISS FITZHUGH.

Young Custis was married about 1803 to this charming person, when he was barely twenty-three years of age. On his beautiful estate of a thousand acres, opposite Washington City, on the Potomac, he built a very handsome residence, to which he carried his young wife in the early years of their marriage; and here he settled down to the life of a planter, to which he gave himself with much assiduity. He became a man of many elegant accomplishments, and a valuable member of society. He had a great talent for oratory, and was widely popular as a public speaker. Hardly anything in the new city could go on without his aid and presence.

After the death of Mrs. Washington, the treasures of Mount Vernon were transferred to Arlington, as the inheritance of her only grandson. This still kept up in the nation at large the interest in the Custis family. Here were gathered many pictures of Washington, and all the valuables belonging to him. Arlington thenceforth became the center of attraction to all who visited the national Capital, and Mr. Custis proved himself the most hospitable of hosts. No foreigner of any note visited him without carrying away some little memento that had belonged to his grandfather. That he should give away autographs, and such trifles, was not surprising; but one of his granddaughters tells me that few distinguished people went away without carrying with them a plate, or a cup, or something of value that had belonged to the Washington sets of glass or china. He allowed picnics and outdoor amusements of all kinds to take place on his fine grounds. On his estate,

about half a mile from the house, there was a very fine spring, surrounded by a beautiful meadow. He had this kept shorn for the pleasure-seekers of Washington; and he had a summer-house and spring-house erected there, for the convenience of their outdoor entertainment; for nothing delighted him more than to add to the enjoyment of young people. Arlington thus became a historic spot; its hospitality embraced all comers, and there was scarcely a day in which parties did not go over from Washington to visit it. The gentle hostess was as generous as her husband, and lavished her kind attentions, through a long series of years, upon thousands of strangers.

Mr. Custis was very fond of art, and cultivated it after a fashion of his own. He had really no knowledge of its technique; but he had much skill in drawing and grouping; and the walls of Arlington were hung with great canvases, portraying many of the battles of the Revolution. He had a favorite old servant, who, his friends used laughingly to say, handled the brush like his master, and did the drudgery work of filling in his backgrounds. To the press of the day the master of Arlington was a frequent contributor; and he was in demand everywhere for patriotic orations, in which he distinguished himself. He had four children; all died in infancy, save the youngest, Mary, who became the wife of Robert E. Lee.

As the years went on, grandchildren gathered about his knees. His devotion to them was extreme, and their adoration of "Grandpapa Custis" was no less so. Lying beside me is a pretty letter, addressed to his little granddaughter Agnes when her father was superintendent at West Point, full of sweet counsel, and complimenting her on the good handwriting and spelling of the letter which he had just received. He was exceedingly indulgent to his grandchildren, who spent much of their earlier life at Arlington during Colonel Lee's absence on frontier duty. I was told by one of them an amusing instance of the way in which he coddled and spoiled them.

This little granddaughter, of seven or eight, had been mainly brought up at Arlington, and was the especial darling of her grandparents. She was a most loving child, if perhaps a little spoiled

by them, and she took it into her mischievous head, one day, to give them what she thought would be a little scare, not really intending anything serious by it. She thought it would be so droll to have the whole establishment turned out to hunt for her; so she determined to make them believe that she was lost. Toward dusk, one summer evening, she strolled away, down into a grove bordering on the Potomac, having taken care to steal forth without being seen by any one. She sauntered about in the grove till dusk, then, watching her opportunity when no one was about, she glided back to the house, entered it by one of the distant wings, which was only used as a suite of rooms for visitors, went softly upstairs, and choosing one apartment, the farthest removed, let herself in, locked the door, and climbed up into the high-post bed, where she soon fell fast asleep.

As dark came on, inquiries began to be made about the little absentee; search was instituted in all the rooms of the house,—in the gardens, over the lawn, everywhere it was thought possible the child could have strayed. All the household of servants were questioned. Not one of them had seen her. The dear grand-mamma's anxiety became extreme, and at last amounted to a species of anguish, for she thought of the long sloping to the river, and of the possibility that her child might have wandered thither and fallen in. At length whispers began to be circulated that the Potomac must be dragged, when one of the servants suggested that they had not yet gone over the distant wing of the house. A band of them, carrying lights, and headed by Mr. Custis, went to visit these apartments. Door after door was opened, but the rooms were empty. But all this noise and clatter at length aroused the little culprit from her sleep. She heard them approaching the room in which she lay, and, sitting up in bed, she saw a streak of light under the door. In an instant more the door was tried, but, as it was locked, they could not, of course, open it.

"My darling, my darling!" cried the trembling grandfather, "are you there?"

This was the little mischief's moment of exultation, for which she had arranged the whole dramatic proceeding! To have all Arlington searching for her was something very stirring.

She kept as still as a mouse; again came the petition, "My darling, speak, if you are within!" But there was not a sound. At length she heard a groan from her grandpapa: "She is n't there—she can't be there!"

One of the old servants bent his ear to the crack of the door.

"Mastah," he whispered, "I think she be; I dun hear de bed creak!"

Another pounding at the door and another pleading petition to be let in; but the determined little "darling" still held them at bay, until she heard her grandfather say, "Jim, go and bring an axe and hew down the door!"

Then her courage failed her; she climbed down from the bed, and, putting her lips to the keyhole, called out:

"Grandpapa, if you promise nothing shall be done to me for scaring you, I'll open the door!"

The grandpapa, only too much overjoyed to have his lost pet safe again, solemnly promised her that she should not be punished. She accordingly opened the door, and was carried off in triumph to her agonized grandmother, who, tearfully waiting to hear the result of the river-dragging, which she supposed had taken place, received her, as may be imagined, with nothing but expressions of thanksgiving and joy, with which not one word of reproach was mingled.

As long as he lived Mr. Custis was an object of great interest to the Washington people in general, but more especially to the diplomatic circles and foreigners of note who visited the Capital; for he was the last link that bound up the interest of the country with Washington's family. He stood out in clear relief as a historic character; and was, himself, so full of anecdote and reminiscence relating to his grandfather, that he was continually surrounded by a circle of charmed listeners. He might well have wearied of the demands made upon him as a host; but he was very genial and easy-tempered, and always ready to exert himself for the entertainment of all comers, and did not grudge that tourists were continually breaking in upon the privacy of the family life.

He died in October, 1857, leaving the large and beautiful estate of Arlington to his only child, Mrs. Mary Custis Lee.



March .

It was raining hard when I went to bed ;
The creek was over its banks, they said ,

And in the morning far and wide
The meadows were flooded on every side ;

There was water over the yard below,
And it looked like a place I did not know :

The wind swept by with a rushing sound ,
And the dog-house floated around and round .

When father went out to the barn that day
I thought he'd surely be swept away .

In long gum boots he stepped from the door ;
And the water was up to his knees and more .

I thought, if the flood should never go down,
We'd build a boat and row to town ,

For there we would buy our bread and meat
And pies and all things good to eat ,

And living here for all our days
We would almost be like castaways .

K.P.

SEVEN LITTLE INDIAN STARS.

(An Iroquois Legend of the Pleiades.)

BY MRS. S. M. B. PIATT.

SEVEN little Indian boys were they,
Dancing with the moonbeams on a mound.
In the wind they all were whirled away,
And the fireflies searched the dews around.

Through the woods there went the mother-cry.
Every oak-leaf shook upon its stem,
Every eagle started up the sky
And — their shadows went to look for them.

Seven little Indian stars are they,
Seven, and only one, my child, is dim.
That 's the Singer, their sad stories say;
That 's the Singer — let us pity him.

Oh, the little Singer! How the bee
Missed him till her heart was fit to break;
How she hid wild honey murmuringly,
Summer after summer, for his sake.

How the young deer with a wistful look,
Grieving for her dark boy, without rest
Wandered till of her own will she took
The lone chieftain's arrow in her breast.

Oh, the little Singer! (You can see
He 's not shining as the others are.)
Once, when all the stars made wishes, he
Wished he did n't have to be a star!

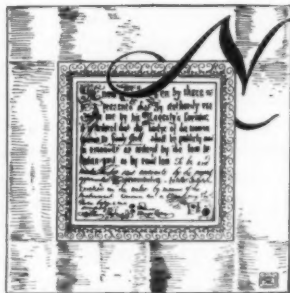
Oh, the little Singer! When the rest
Of those little Indian stars — ah, me! —
Sang together, sang to God, their best,
He would mock a bluebird in a tree.



The DUCKING of GOODY GRILL

TOLD IN THE YEAR of GRACE: 1693.

BY ALICE MAUDE EWELL.



OW, there be some will have it for true how that same law was the best law was ever passed by Assembly in all Virginia, from the very first Christianwhite 'stablishment thereof till this present. 'T was fairly needful, I reckon. Mayhap 't was by reason of our forbears being holden o'er still-tongued so long i' the old country, 'way off yonder, that the out-speaking here did fetch to such a pass. Speak but a word amiss ('t is said) o'er yon in Merry England, 'gainst whichsoever side is uppermost, king or rebels, pope or parson, and off goes your head, if you be gentleman born; up you swing, gallows high, if you be t' other way. Aye, so my grandfather hath a many a time told me they did in his young days. That 's the way on 't there, forsooth; an' such ones as know too much to-day will know naught at all to-morrow. Well, as for the scandal-mongering here in Virginia, 't was clean past law an' gospel 'fore that measure was carried. I was a youngster then, when we did first hear of the new statute set a-working, i' the year of grace an' knowledge, sixteen hund'ed an' sixty-three, or nigh thereabouts; yet good thirty year agoe tho' it be, I remember well the clack-clackety-clack o' gossiping,

week in and out, there 'd be a-going on, enow to make one mad. So 't was time for a stop-short, as all sensible bodies said; but for the law itself, why it did ever seem unto me (to tell truth) a right one-sided business, in the manner of being a mere man's judgment and o'er hard on women. Now, this was the long an' short on 't, for all I do forget the wording, to wit: That in a judgment after trial of any woman, for slander,—to the hurting of anybody's living, welfare or honorable repute,—the woman's husband or next natural man kindred (it being proven for sure) should pay in fine therefor, five hund'ed pound o' tobacco, if that he did choose; but if he did not so choose, why then the woman must be ducked, o'er head and ears, three times, for that her aforesaid offense. So, mark ye well that word *choose*, neighbors. Therein runneth the root of my fair objection. What an easy come-off was it, to be sure, for him that might be more stingily saving of his tobacco than of 's lawful, wedded wife; or, may happen, might bear some little secret grudge in 's heart 'gainst the same. Truly no man o' proper genteel pride will choose his womankind to suffer such disgracement; yet thus was the profit in fines oft lost, belike, to the State, by will of a sorry churl. Now a man must needs hold tight rein at home, as we all do know, for peace an' comfort's sake, an' the man's born ruling-right—yet 't was ever 'gainst the natural grain o' me to see a woman rough-handled in public. Nay, for all I be myself a man, an' looking from mine own lawful side, I could ne'er abear that sight. To be sure, they are too oft but misbehaving

creatures — an' that 's truth; but them the good Lord did make as well as us, belike, with all their misbehavingness inside, an' (so the blessed Psalmist saith) we must suffer fools gladly whilst the world standeth, for here they 'll always be.

Now Goody Grill was the only one woman ever ducked under that law in our town — or in all those parts nigh surrounding. 'T was a notable business, that, and a mighty talk an' clamor, both then and afterwards, concerning the same. "Let 's hear it now," say ye? Well, well, 't is a longish tale, forsooth — yet of such right comical turn as saveth from dullness. I 'll not grudge the telling o' 't to them that will duly listen. In faith your true-born story-teller can no more abear interruption (nor neither should) than your singer with instruments, or a lover bewhispering his sweetheart. There be some folks quick enow at asking for a tale, yet when 't is fairly begun, with head an' tongue a-warming to the business — how then? Why, lo! one will be rolling his eye this way — another whispering some outside foolery, that; whilst here is somebody maybe, on t' other hand, with eyes shut an' mouth unmannerly open, a-snoring, fast in sleep. Howsoever, I have told this one to your betters afore now — when the red wine was going round to boot — an' they scarcely durst swallow or fetch breath for listening. So, since ye 're finely pressing, I 'll e'en begin; but hark ye, this in warning; for all I be good-humored as the most, let me but catch aught like these wandering signs amongst you — mum is my word!

Well, as for Goody Grill she was for certain (as everybody said) one o' them that law was pointedly made for. Whomsoever the cap befits may wear it, as the old saying goeth, an' never mob-cap nor Sunday gauze an' lacery did so well suit her mischief-brewing head, I trow, as that same. Feast or fast, marrying or burying, young ones' frolic or old ones' falling out — her finger must needs be in everybody's pie, her long tongue in everybody's matters. Not that she was o'er much of a gadder abroad; nay, to give Satan his due (as the word runneth), not so — she being the rather contrariwise, an' closer housekeeper than ordinary. Yet for the house itself that she inhabited, 't was in the very middle o' the town, well windowed on all sides. North, south, east, an' west was her outlook — rain or

shine. So there was she, like any great o'er fat spider in its web, a-waiting fool-flies for her catching; only them did she suck not bodily bone-dry o' flesh an' blood but the rather in a mindful sense of all the news i' their heads. 'T was a wonderful thing, in sooth (as many spoke), and a thing to shake head o'er, — nay, none short of a dark true mystery in nature, no less, — how much she did make shift to hear an' tell again. An' yet 't is plain enow, come to reason on 't an' considering well the nature o' female creatures. She 'd a way with women as 't were a drawing spell. No matter how oft they 'd be a-falling out with her; no matter how many tales, scandals, an' strange, injurious hintings of their misbehavior might be tracked home to her door — there would they be, next whipstitch (the silly ones!), hob-gossiping by her fire again, a-telling all their secrets, an' next neighbors' besides, o'er a glass o' her currant wine. To be sure her wine was of the best home-made, an' scarce to be refused, as also all her brewing an' cookery; for nobody could say true that she did neglect aught of housewife's business, for all her wagging tongue. Her husband was but a timorsome, pottering soul; a mighty little small body, an' looking mayhap like she 'd stepped o'er his head in 's younger days an' stopped short his natural growth; as old folks say such overstepping will, sure enough. Notwithstanding, for all his undersize an' his meekness in ordinary, he 'd a sharpish glint in 's little pale eyes, and a sharpish tang i' the turn o' his tongue that I've seen her taken aback by more times than one. He 'd a natural-born turn for double meanings in speech (had old Tommy Grill), and a humor sense o' the comical sort that she could ne'er catch up with — an' that 's truth. She was the glibber tongued, to be sure, but he was the quicker thoughted. Many 's the time I've heard him point a sly word 'gainst her that would set all a-smiling but herself — who, notwithstanding she did feel the sharpness o' 't, was neither quick enow to tell straight wherein it lay or have back answer ready. Howsoever, 't was not oft he troubled her, being belike half-lazy, half-afear'd to try such game o'er much.

Now, she 'd neither chick nor child; an' being of a shrewish, managing turn 't was hard lines

an' little peace for poor old Tom—as ye may guess, neighbors. Truly, as I told you afore, nobody might ever say that she neglected her housewife's duties. So! He 'd ha' been glad enow of a bit neglecting, would old Tommy, I do reck'. Whether she let him wash his own face himself, or did that business for him (as well as combing of his wig, no less), I never rightly did know for certain. Faith! 't was no lawful wonder that he looked half washen away an' scarce bigger than a ball o' soap after hard day's scrubbery therewith. Ne'er such a scrubber an' polisher as she was there in all our town, as was commonly allowed by even the notabest women-folk. For mine own part, I would never choose floor too white-sanded to step 'cross it in peace or my chair too slippery shining for aught but a looking-glass. Less of cleaning, more of easeful living comfort, better suiteth my notion, who am (to be sure) but a mere man in habitudes; yet your housewife will have it that such painstaking is a saving virtue. Praise to whom praise is due, but 't is pity her speech matched not her fair house an' furnishings. Zounds! she was a caution to bachelors seeking wives; yet every human hath a soft spot somewhere or t' other. There was one body i' this world 'gainst whom she ne'er spake word—an' that was Peggy Joy.

In sooth, 't was no wonder her favor set that way, so far as concerned the maid herself, for she was the takingest little wench in all Virginia, to my mind an' thinking, whosoever might speak contrariwise. Aye, aye; for once in my life I did set horses with Goody Grill i' that affection; an' however much the towns-folk might talk of her airs an' her graces, her high-fighting looks an' lady-fine ways in general, her rings on fingers an' silken ribbands a-flying; how despitefully soever they might cry Lady Peacock! or Mistress Mincing! what time she walked abroad,—why, this I'll say for the lass, she was pretty-behaved as any to me. "Give you good day, Master Muffet!" would she say when we did meet. In sooth, I do 'most see her now, the pretty slim creature; an' for all her saucy brown head ('t would be mayhap a bit too far to one side), her smile was fairly enow, faith! to make old hearts turn back young again. Nevertheless 't was but common nature for a young, gay thing like that to be set up in mind as she 'd

been properly born to in station. Now there were few gentle-born folk in our town, they being mostly the common sort who there inhabited; but e'en 'mongst such gentlefolk as were, I promise you that Master Fanfare Joy (the father o' Mistress Peg) was mightily looked up to. Ye see he was own third-cousin, or some such kin, to my Lord Babble, in Chopshire County, England; him whose title and estate our town was named for. Then there was his house, forsooth, past matching in the country; builded on the main middle street and all of blood-red brick fetched 'cross water on shipboard from Manchester town; an' seeing that all other dwellings thereabout were but of wood, as well as right make-a-shift building besides (for there be no stones to speak of in that part o' Virginia), an' seeing how that she was sole heiress to such grand place and station—'t is no wonder, say I, that the lass showed a bit uplifted, now and again. 'T will be always your would-be gentlefolk that mislike the real quality. Aye, howsoever much they do pay court to their company there 's ever a thorn o' comparison a-rankling deep in heart; but I was always well content (thank the good Lord!) with my plain, decent station. I was ne'er one o'er forward to shake hands with my betters an' then to fleer at 'em afterward for having the softer palm; an' whether 't was this same backwardness in nature that pleased her I know not, but one thing I know for certain, as I spoke afore, the maid did always carry it mannerly enow with me.

Now, it did appear a right strange, curious turn that Goody Grill, who had in common been first one to pick flaws an' cast blame,—'t was strange that Goody should be so fondly-hearted toward the child; an' no less uncommon it was that Mistress Peggy (considering o' the difference in age an' quality) should set such store by Goody Grill; but so did their favor continue, from Missy's toddling baby-times clean on till the main happening o' this tale came to pass, when she was counting a-most fifteen year old. Scarce a day went by but she 'd be lifting the latch of Goody's door, on tip-toes (may happen), i' the early days, when she was no more 'an knee-high to a lame duck, yet 't was n't long 'fore she shot high enow for that or aught else a-going. So then 't would be not

alone currant wine, I promise you, but cakes an' conserves, tarts an' sweetings, to boot—as 't were the very heart o' the innermost cupboard turned fairly inside out. Not that the maid was anywise greedy. Nay, nay; she was lady-fine an' dainty as the queen herself, but the dame would press all o' the best upon her. She was a rare one for flower-growing, too, was Goody Grill, tho' ne'er given to pluck 'em over-much. It seemeth to me that 's what they bloom for, an' would be their own selves asking you to do, if so 't were they might speak. Now she was commonly for saving o' the seed; yet let Mistress Peggy but look longingly at one among 'em—London Pride or Johnny-jump-up, cockscomb or marigold, red rose or white—'t was hers for the plucking, an' double welcome. Nobody durst say word 'gainst the child when Goody was by, how sharp soever their tongues might be at it—cut an' thrust—with all other folk in Babbletown; nor, for mine own part, do I think (as some said) that 't was court to the lassie's station, this rare kindness o' hers, but the rather true natural heart's affection—the which was after proven.

So, well, as concerning the other folk that do figure i' this tale, there be but only two more to tell of in particular; namely, Sukey Steptoe an' her boy Will.

Now as for Sukey Steptoe; she was but a widow woman, for her husband having gone with a hunting company to the mountains one time (when Will was but very little an' small) was by the red Indians most barbarously killed an' scalpen. So that was the last o' him, as of several others in that party likewise; an' Sukey, his wife, lived on, in a doleful widowing way, and i' the same house that he had builded, on a smallish clearing, situate 'mongst the pines just outside Babbletown. 'T was a poor place for a

living, and a poor, scant manner o' life; yet, had she set in together with the lad, shoulder to shoulder, when he 'd fetched to a sizable age—had she so allowed—they might ha' done fairly well enow, by mouth an' back. He was a likely lad as any, an' nimble-ready as the best; but women be too oft simple-witted no less than soft in heart where their young ones are concerned, an' Suke must needs make him a gentleman, forsooth. How she did get wherewithal for his



TOMMY GRILL.

rigging-out, goodness knoweth! Linsey-woolsey, and one frock o' that, to her back, was good enow for her own self, an' nobody could say that she ever complained on 't; but Master Will must have his ruffled shirt o' fair linen, his fine laced coat, an' hat with feathers a-flying; his kerchief in 's hand, his feet drest out with sewn shoes, an' clock-wrought stockings. A pretty

orphan was he! as all the house-mothers said; an' their sons with fathers 'live an' warm scarce fit to hold a candle to his fineness. Ne'er would they (as they stoutly vowed) give to him or his foolish mother so much as a finger's wrapping; yet for the matter o' that, I do vastly mis-doubt if either Sukey or the lad would ha' been meekly thankful for such gift. Howsoever, let but a boy be comely an' hold up his head with a knowing air, an' 't is little the younger women (or may happen some old ones, either) will be caring how much he worketh for the clothes on 's back. Now, Will was a pretty fellow, to be sure, with 's hair gold-yellow an' curly, as 't were done on curling tongs (which maybe 't was, in sooth), and eyes that shamed the sky's blueness. When he did use to come, gay whistling, in all his deckery so fiddle-fine into the town each day for this, that, an' 't other thing,—as to Tib Tucker's shop for a ha'pennyworth o' green ginger, or some such vast business matter,—why, 't was little the giddy maids, a-smiling back answers to his saucy looks, took thought of 's mother left moiling behind. Day in and out she did slave i' the corn-plant or tobacco, or did 'tend her pigs an' hens, or else weave at the loom, maybe, with spinning or knitting betwixt whiles, an' such woman's work as by in-taking she did eke out their living withal; an' this that a strapping lad past twelve year old should be taking it leisurely abroad. Aye, there 's no telling the nature o' mothers—or mothers' sons, neither; but I 'm thinking she that so bred an' sent him forth was more to blame than the lad.

'T was in late summer o' the year sixteen hundred an' sixty-four, nigh about six months or so after the ducking law was made, an' likewise nigh about the time when Mistress Peggy Joy went off a-visiting her grand kinfolds in York County, when the slander 'gainst Will Steptoe was first set going round. I mind well my meeting the maid one sunshiny morn i' the street, a bit outside Goody Grill, her door. "Good-bye to you, Master Muffet," saith she, with the takingest sweet smile in nature, an' such as shamed in brightness e'en the very sky's blue, or her fine new rig-up o' feathers an' fal-lals for the journey. "'T will be many a day 'fore I see you again, or anybody in Babbletown. Good-bye an' good luck to you," quoth she, an' she put out her little

lily-white hand as to a gentleman born. Then off she goeth her way adown street like any tripping fairy; an' 't was later on o' that very same mortal day that I did first catch the bruit concerning Will Steptoe.

Now, truly, your slander is the only rolling stone that 's bound to gather moss. 'T is the bruisingest stone i' this round world; aye, worse than cobble or flint, an' the one that sinketh deepest; and no matter how little 't is at starting, the longer it rolleth the bigger 't will get. Now, nobody troubled to ask who started that stone a-rolling, smashing down atop of Will Steptoe, his character; but one and all they were ready enough, forsooth, to stick on a bit o' moss. 'T would be, may happen, but a black look and a head-shake, when that lad passed by, or else one a-saying to t'other (secret like), "Look keen to thy belongings, neighbor, for folks do say he 's not to be trusted." Or else here would come another, with winks an' blinks for all the world like any owl i' the sun, saying, "Aye, aye! For my part, I did never think so much finery on a widow's orphan was like to be honestly come by." Then would they sigh an' groan dolefully, yet — as one might shrewdly see withal — not wanting inside satisfaction. So it did pass; an' for all those o'erplain words rogue an' thief were not unmannerly spoken, why, the meaning on 't was plain enow, to wit: That Will was a thief an' his mother no better than partaker in profit o' his naughtiness.

Well, so did this rumor spread from day to day. Nobody said to a certainty what 't was he had stole. Perchance one would be saying now how somebody had him told 't was one thing; then another vowing that he 'd heard tell 't was somewhat else; an' so matters went, that-a-way, till at last one time Will did hear it with 's own ears, and after this manner that happened.

Now, 't was in Tib Tucker's shop, where he did come for a ball of sewing-thread, an' he 'd come with a new silken kerchief tied smartly round his neck. So there were all eyes a-glancing sidewise at the kerchief (which same, as did afterward come out, was given new to Sukey by one of our town gentlewomen not long afore), an' there was Master Will, the fool fellow! mightily pleased with his setting-off; when all on a sudden who doth cry out but one o' Tib

Tucker's young ones, mighty loud an' shrill, with the shop full of townfolk hearing, saying, "Billy Steptoe! Billy Steptoe! where did you steal yon kerchief?"

So the lad looked around, laughing at that, yet when he saw the people's faces, forsooth, an' how they did look strangely from him unto each other,—as 't were in dark meaning way,—why, then he turned as white as his shirt (which was, to be sure, of a fair fine linen, an' clean beyond his lawful quality), an' he speaketh out loud, with voice a-tremble for rage, "If anybody saith I steal," quoth he, "the devil hath stole his wits."

With that he walketh out o' the shop, a-slaming the door behind him. Straight home he goeth to tell his tale; an' pretty soon cometh Sukey Steptoe into the town, a very figure o' passion, poor soul, with her head 'way up yonder, an' her face 'twixt death-white one second, an' fire-red the next.

Zounds! what a clamor and a-going on was there, to be sure! with her 'fending an' her proving, her scolding an' her weeping, her crying out 'gainst such cruel slander—up an' down the town. 'T was no wonder, i' faith, that every man jack of 'em that had put tongue's end in the business was so make-a-shift an' ready to lay it on 's next neighbor's back. Nay, they did know naught concerning it, the innocent, meek lambs! An' 't was all "Such an one 's say so," or else, "As I did hear tell," with but poor memories to fall back on. Howsoever, the governor's lady herself had been scarce more roused up by that word "steal," I reckon, than Dame Sukey that time. From house to house did she go, till folks must, for very peace's sake, needs give authority; so the long an' short on 't was that all did trace back to starting with Goody Grill. That much did she find out for certain (as nobody might deny or did take great pains to hide); an' Sukey was a knowing woman, for a widow, in some matters, notwithstanding a fool-creature in others. She 'd heard o' the new law, according to which same it was that she had Goody arrested an' brought unto trial in court—which did chance to be then sitting—the very next day after.

Now, as to the ins and outs o' that trial, 't would make a tale over long to tell; but 't was a right

notable one an' well remembered in Babbletown a-many a day. The proving an' the 'fending on it, the calling to witness of this one, that, or t' other, the judging an' the jurying, I did see with mine own eyes an' hear with mine own ears—being myself one amongst them that filled the court-house nigh to bursting that day. Few on 'em were truly sorry for her, the prisoner, I do reckon, seeing how scarce a one was there but had some time or other felt the malice o' her tongue. Some were a bit scared to think how nigh their own selves had come (as part-takers) to the same pass as she, an' most were right glad in heart belike to have so well escapen. As to Goody herself, she durst not deny the fact, nor neither could, of saying so an' so; only she stoutly affirmed one thing, namely, that somebody had her told, afore she ever spoke or thought on 't, that Will was a rogue. This would she take her Bible-oath on, said she, yet did she flatly refuse, forsooth, to tell this person's name. So that made the rather against her; for all said, "Tush! 't is a cunning come-off for her own naughtiness, an' nobody did tell her any such a word"; an' moreover, no dishonesty at all being proven on Will Steptoe nor Sukey neither, why, then, the lawful sentence was passed upon Goody Grill of either a fine or a ducking.

Now, she 'd never a notion to be ducked, I warrant, for all the bigness o' the fine. 'T was a pretty price to buy off with, but she was a proud one—was Goody Grill. 'T was told she was so struck amaze with rage, when old Tommy did refuse to pay, that she spake not a single word for two minutes space; yet I reckon she made up for 't when that she 'd once fetched breath. 'T is like, if she 'd been out o' guard, with her ten talons once upon him, there 'd pretty soon ha' been end on 't all—one way or t' other. Howsoever, there was she, in lawful durance held; an' there was he (with all Virginia law on his side) who said nay, an' stuck to 't. Now, he was ne'er counted a stingy man, old Tommy, an' five hund'ed pound o' tobacco, or the money value o' that same, would neither ha' maked him or broken him, for he 'd a goodish fifty acres of land a mile outside the town that fetched tobacco fine an' plenty as any in those parts. Tobacco was money all o'er Virginia, the same

then as now, an' dwelled folks in country or dwelled they in town 't was tobacco kept 'em a-going. 'T was tobacco they did eat, an' tobacco they drank, an' tobacco they wore on their backs; 't was tobacco that married 'em in



WILL STEPTOE.

church an' buried 'em in church-yard. Now, five hund'ed pound was a pretty sum; aye, aye, a goodish sum; but I 'm thinking that was n't the only one reason that set old Tom so fast 'gainst payment thereof.

I mind that time o' the ducking well, an' liker 't were yesterday than some thirty year agone. 'T was a sharpish morn o' frost in November month, with a little skim of ice on the horse-pond, but mighty clear an' sunshiny—an' 't was the second day after trial. Folks mince law matters finer these days, an' be longer about 'em, but 't was touch an' go then. Most all the town was up an' stirring, grave an' gay, young an' old, out to see that sight; for 't was no such

a thing as did come off commonly, being not only the first ducking under that new law, in our parts (and Goody Grill herself a notable character), but the first public punishment for misbehavior in long while; nay, none other since Sam Crook was stood in pillory with 's ears marked for hog-stealing. There be some fine feeling ones in these days that will have it to say how even solemn, orderly hanging is no sight for decent folks to see, let alone duckings, whippings, settings-up in pillory, an' the like spectacles. Yet others ask how can one profit by the lawful sample, forsooth, if he seeth it not?

So went I with t' others to the open space round the pond, where stood the post an' beam ducking-stool a-ready, over 'gainst the water's edge. 'T was e'en nine o' the clock when I did fetch there, being nigh the very last to come, an' there were all a-looking gaol-way every minute for the prisoner.

Faith! but what a-crooking o' necks and a-goggling of eyes was there!—an' when Master Fanfare Joy spake up mockingly, saying, "Nay, be not so eager, good people, for I warrant she 'll let ye know when she cometh," why, everybody laughed at his wit. There was that gentleman, grandly drest, a-standing like the commoners, yet to be sure as one most too proud to look; but as to his daughter, Mistress Peggy, she had not come back to the town. Two or three times had Goody, since the trial, asked concerning her, if so 't were she had yet come, and all did think how she was right well pleased that the maid should thus know an' see naught of her public disgrace. There was Tib Tucker with her 'leven young ones all a-row, having shut up shop that morn an' fetched all, big an' little, to learn a lesson 'gainst telling tales on neighbors. There was Sukey Steptoe, in her best frock, with her face the face of a woman that winneth upper hand o'er her enemy; yet Master Will himself was not to be seen, an' some folk whispered 'round how that he did appear the rather holpen than hurt by this business, being not nigh so much abroad and a deal busier at home.

But of all them there a-waiting the foremost one, an' the earliest, an' the one most in holiday fashion bedecked, was old Tommy Grill.

Truly it maketh me laugh, even this day, to think o' that old sinner an' the way he did look that time. A mighty long face he did pull, now and again, with a solemn, melancholic shake o' the head belike, for looks' sake; and all the while there stood he in 's best holiday clothes (silk hosen, an' buckles, and all) that she 'd scarce give him touch of in ordinary; there was he rigged out, fairly chuckling in 's throat to see her publicly discomfited.

Well, well! a right long time we waited, but I know not how long by the clock, 'fore some-

like would ha' been more in keeping. Her head she did hold high as the best, a-looking all boldly i' the eye, an' she was carefuller drest than common in her second-best stuff gown. 'T is told to be ever the way on 't with women that did publicly suffer for anything. Be it hanging or burning or ducking with 'em; stripes laid on or heads cut off; be they queens or be they subjects; from the Lady Bullen, that was Queen Elizabeth's own mother, to Goody Grill in Babbletown — they 'll ne'er forget well dressing up for the same. There she did come —



PEGGY JOY.

body nigh on gaol-side raised a shout saying, "There come they! There come they!" An' presently we did see Goody coming, sure enow, with the sheriff and others of 's company.

Now, she looked taller than common, as did seem to me, 'stead o' the contrariwise smaller —

and all the other folks a-making way, with whispering an' staring. Steady she looked out o' the eyes, for all her chin 't was a bit quaking, till on a sudden, having come near the ducking place, whom doth she set eyes on but Tommy Grill! Zounds! how red her face did turn at

that sight! 'T was redder than old Tom's waistcoat, i' faith, which same showed, may happen, of a brightness scarce befitting his age. I did think one minute that she was like for a stroke o' the vertigo, by the way she puffed an' blew; but the next she found her strength — aye, an' her speech too — quick enow.

So then she crieth, a-tremble from head to foot for very passion, "What, sir! What! Is 't thou! thou poor creature! thou whey-face! thou hop-o'er-my-thumb! thou stingy no-man! — a-standing by to see thy wife mistreated!"

Then quoth old Tommy right meekly, in 's little, small voice (for all his eyes they did twinkle 'way deep down), "'T is oft told" (saith he) "a husband should stand by his wife."

Now, in sooth, that did make her madder than before; an' no wonder, neither. Whereupon she crieth out still louder, "A pretty husband thou — so decked out in thy best for my disgracement as 't were Christmas or Easter or some such uncommon day! How darest thou, sirrah, put on those clothes?" Then saith old Tom (an' his voice 't was a bit softer than afore), "'T is the most uncommonest day, this day, that ever I did see; an' for the sadness on 't or the gladness on 't" (quo' he), "why, that is as one looketh — this way or t' other."

Then she made a dash at him as 't were to tear the coat off his back; — or maybe him limb from limb; howsoever, he made shift to dodge her cunningly, whilst Mark Toucham, the sheriff, an' two of his company, advancing, led her toward the big ducking-stool that was creaking there hard by. So next they did read out the sentence on her, in due form an' loudly, that all might hear an' know 't was fairly done in accordance; but yet when everything seemed a-ready, lo! 't was found that the beam o' the ducking-stool was not o'er-strong and must needs have something done to help its working. Truly it did creak, an' the chair, too, no less, as fairly like to break with Goody's weight; and everybody roundabout was a-listening for dear life what should come next.

So then she (being fast i' the ducking-stool) did cast up her eyes to skyward an' say in a loud voice, dolefully, "Oh! to think, — to think how many fine matches I did refuse, — to think how many a brave fellow, tall an' rich an'

comely, did come in my young days a-courting me, who am now tied to such a husband! Fool, fool, that I was!" (crieth she) "to choose the like o' such a creature! Was never such another ne'er-do-well! Would I had married Peter Still — for all he was deaf an' dumb!"

Whereupon saith old Tommy, with a twinkling eye,

"Aye, aye, my lass; he 'd ha' made thee the fittest husband, belike, of any in this world."

Now, them that stood near by must needs smile at that, an' she, screeching out in very passion, crieth, "Oh! oh! oh! thou misbehaving! I will splash thee top an' toe!"

To which speech did her loving husband make answer, saying,

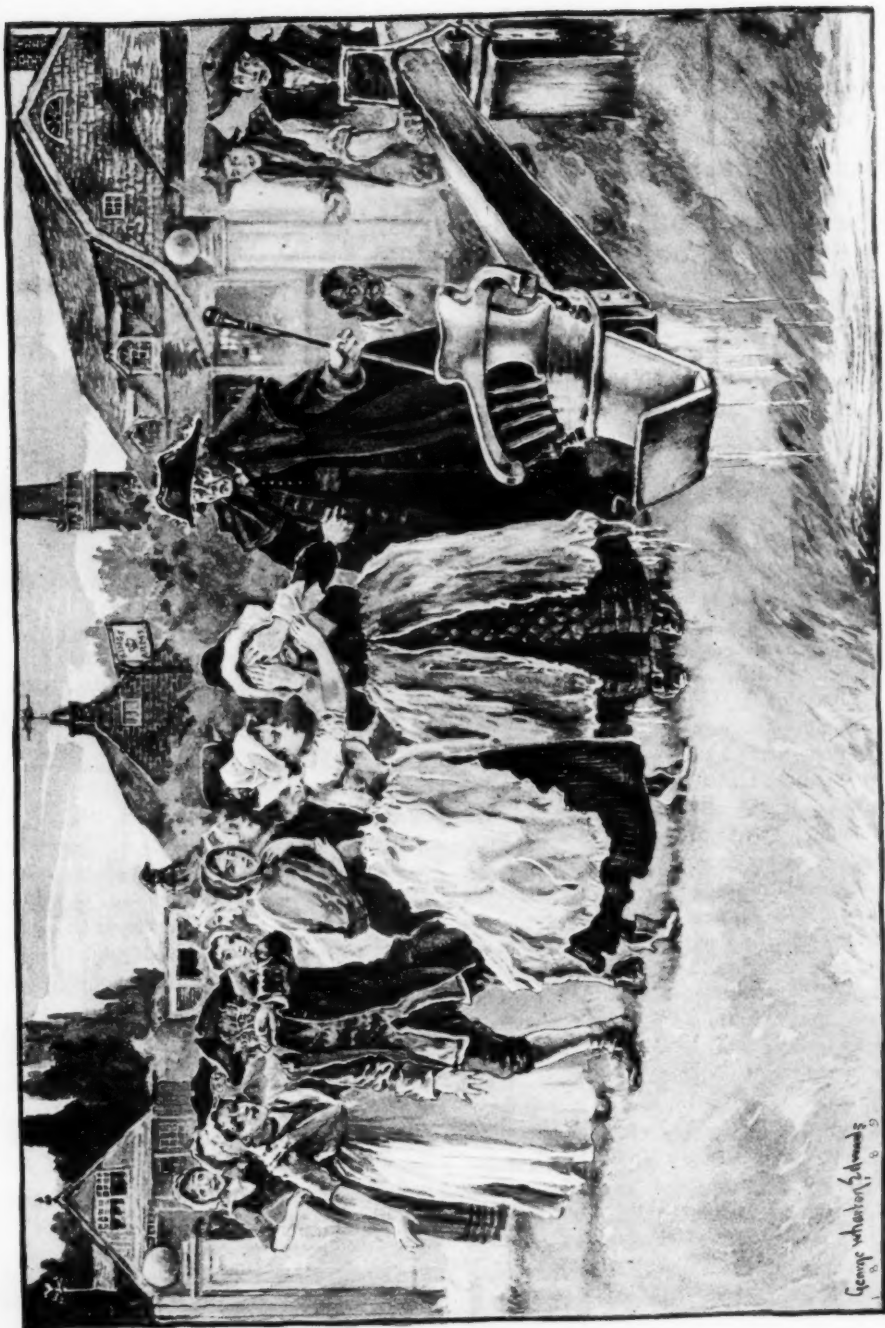
"Aye, aye; 't will be good for Sunday clothes. Mar your own making, wife, if so 't will ease your mind. 'T is all one to me" (quoth he), "being, thank Heaven, never o'ermuch set on the looks o' things."

Then lo! she 'gan to weep, forsooth, with the tears a-rolling down, crying, "Oh! the fine stitchery that I did waste upon that coat! Would that I had sewn it with pack-thread and a skewer! Oh! oh! alack-a-day, alack-a-day! 't will be the death o' me. I shall be wetted to the skin."

In sooth, I was sorry for the poor soul then — but as for heartless old Tommy Grill he was smiling from one ear to t' other.

"'T is a right cold case to be in," quoth he, "an' that 's truth. Wet to the skin was I with the rain t' other day — thou mindest? — when I might ne'er come anigh the fire, thou saidst, because o' thy floor new sanded. Aye; 't is a right shivering business" (quo' he), "an', dear wife, prythee do not catch cold."

Well, such a look as she gave him! but by that time all was a-ready fore she might open her mouth. Out she swung over the water — and down came the ducking-stool with such a scream as never did I hear. All the women-folks went "Oh-h-h!" "Ee-e-e!" for all the world like they did feel the cold water each one adown her own back. Even Sukey Steptoe crieth, "Lord ha' mercy on her!" an' shut her eyes up tight. Yet, truth to tell, the water i' the pond (as did appear) had scarce touched the hem o' Goody's gown; an' that very time it was,



"AS FOR THE MAID, A-LAUGHING WITH ONE EYE AN' CRYING WITH T' OTHER, WHAT DOTHS SHE, FORSOOTH, BUT FLING HER TWO ARMS 'ROUND GODDY'S NECK."

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whilst everybody did catch breath, just 'fore the real dip, when we heard another scream 'way off yonder at the outermost edge o' the crowd.

Then Mark Toucham an' t' others helping him stopped short at that, and all the people turned round vastly wondering, whilst as for Goody Grill, there she sat, ready for the ducking, all her teeth a-chatter. Somebody was coming an' calling out—"Wait! wait! stop! stop!" I thought I knew that voice by the sweetness on 't, to be sure,—as I reck' did also Goody Grill her own self,—and I knew the little lily-white hand a-waving of a kerchief. All the folks made way for her, right an' left, a-staring, open-mouthed, to see who 't was—an' there she came, fast as her best speed would fetch her, who but Mistress Peggy Joy!

Well, well! There was she, bareheaded, all of a tremble for running, with her pretty frock all awry with haste o' coming thro' the crowd, an' her pretty ribbands all untied disorderly. Her face 't was red as any red rose, an' her pretty eyes a-blazing, for all she did look ready to cry next word. Twice or thrice did she fetch breath (when that she stopped and stood) with both hands on her heart, an' then, a-wringing 'em, she cried out loud, "Oh, Goody! Goody! Goody!" in that pitiful-sweet a way as shamed us all, there looking, clean to naught. I 'll warrant the old woman would ha' wrung her hands too, only (ye see) her hands they were tied fast with a long silken kerchief,—so there she sat shamedly, with her head down far as 't would be hid on her breast, saying ne'er a word.

Then crieth Mistress Peg:

"Let her go! I pray you let her go. 'T is me you must be ducking, if 't is anybody" (quo' she), "for I 'm the one to blame. 'T was I, 't was I that said he was a rogue, an' she would not 't'll upon me. Oh, prythee let her go!"

Then Goody did give a kind o' groan, and all the people stood amazed. Whereupon went on the maid, saying:

"Nay, but I meant no harm. In sooth," crieth she, right distressfully, "I meant no harm in this world, nor ever did think of her taking it so in earnest an' telling that same again. I never said he stole aught. I did but say he was

a sad rogue, as one may speak, mayhap, about one's naughty little brother."

An' so, as did appear, was the beginning o' that slanderous rumor, thus so curiously a-turning on the turn of one single word, an' the end on 't was that Goody Grill came off with one dip under and a vast deal less o' blame than anybody 'd looked for. Mark Toucham was a straitly law-abiding man, fair-sticking by the letter, an' none too well pleased in 's mind to let her go, for all the people's clamor and beseeching. Yet when Master Fanfare Joy did speak out, taking to himself, 'fore everybody, all risk of that business, why then he made no more ado contrariwise, but let mercy have her way, despite of law an' justice. As for that sweet maid, Mistress Peggy, a-laughing with one eye an' crying with t' other, what doth she, forsooth, but fling her two arms 'round Goody's neck, when that she stepped all dripping from the stool, and kiss her i' the mouth! And what doth Goody Grill her own self at that embracement but burst right out a-crying! And all the folks they 'gan to whisper thereupon, saying one to t' other: "Who 'd ha' thought o' the old scandal-mongering soul having so much forbearance inside of her heart toward any human creature!"

Aye; 't was lucky chance for Goody Grill, I 'm thinking, that little Mistress Peggy did come back so, on a sudden, all unlooked for, on that day.

Now, 't would have fared hard with old Tom, I do reckon, when that she did get free, but for this turn of matters. Homeway he 'd silyly betta'en himself when he saw the tide so set, an' homeway went Goody when all was said an' done. Folks said, a-laughing, as how 't would be "pull Dick, pull Devil," 'twixt them twain that day. The manner o' that I know not, since nobody saw 'em nor neither heard, but one thing I know for certain, namely: that Goody did come to church on Sunday sennight in a frock that must ha' cost some goodish part out o' the five hund'ed pounds o' tobacco. I 'm thinking 't is like he was glad enough to buy his peace so cheap.

Howbeit, after that Goody was carefuller of her speech, having, mayhap, no mind to be ducked again, notwithstanding she had so well escaped; and all other women in Babbletown

did likewise profit by this example. Aye, there was more looking into matters and less idle speaking out, from that day amongst 'em. In sooth, as did appear, that business had done the rather good than harm, seeing 't was not alone the gossips that found the warning o' 't profitable. There was Will Steptoe, who did leave off his false finery an' take kindly to work, to say naught of old Tommy Grill, the more respected at home and abroad all the rest of his days.

'T was a right curious turn-about, that last, an' to my mind scarce deserved, yet true, sure enow, no less. Concerning Mistress Peggy Joy, 't is said she was ever friends with Goody, yet none too oft a visitor, from that time, she hav-

ing well proven, maybe, the danger o' such company-keeping. Faith! she was a maid to bear in mind, was Mistress Peggy. 'T was after I 'd left those parts that she took up with an' married Will Steptoe. For mine own part I did never admire her choice. I reckon that Master Fanfare Joy was as much cast down by that match as Sukey Steptoe, on t' other hand, up-lifted; yet Will was a fine young man, to be sure, as everybody would be telling. Aye, aye; a fine knowledgeable man; but how much is nature and how much is chance nobody knoweth in this mortal world, or ever can tell; and oft I 've fell a-wondering (to think on 't) how much Will Steptoe, in 's proper turning out, did owe to Goody Grill her tongue.



OFF FOR SLUMBERLAND.

BY CAROLINE EVANS.

PURPLE waves of evening play
Upon the western shores of day,
While babies sail, so safe and free,
Over the mystic Slumber Sea.

Their little boats are cradles light;
The sails are curtains pure and white;
The rudders are sweet lullabies;
The anchors, soft and sleepy sighs.

They 're outward-bound for Slumberland,
Where shining dreams lie on the sand,
Like whisp'ring shells that murmur low
The pretty fancies babies know.

And there, among the dream-shells bright,
The little ones will play all night,
Until the sleepy tide turns;—then
They 'll all come sailing home again!

COMEDIES FOR CHILDREN.

FRIENDS OR FOES?

BY ELBRIDGE S. BROOKS.

(THIS comedy is designed for representation by the higher classes in schools, and aims to interpose a plea in behalf of wholesome historical myths as against much of the sensational juvenile literature of the day. Set the stage for the court scene, covering the tables and chairs with dark stuff to answer for the wood scene, or rocky pass, in which the comedy opens. The progress of the piece indicates the stage properties needed. They may

be elaborated or restricted as circumstances permit. Music should be introduced for interludes, or choruses, whenever practicable, in order to accompany or diversify the representation. Any one with a ready ear can "adapt" familiar tunes to suit any selected song or chorus. Let the parts be given to good performers, and spoken with animation and force. The court scene should be made as solemn and "judicial" as possible.)

Characters:

CLIO, Muse of History (girl of 18).

THE LORD CHIEF JUSTICE (boy of 17).

THE STATE'S ATTORNEY (boy of 16).

PORTIA PLEADWELL, Counsel for the Defense (girl of 16).

THE DETECTIVE,

THE POLICEMAN,

THE ELECTRICIAN,

THE CRIER OF THE COURT (boy of 13).

FLEUR DE LYS, Herald of Clio (boy of 12).

Policemen, Guards, Pages, Standard-bearer, Court Officers, and others.

DIDO, Queen of Carthage,

NERO, Emperor of Rome,

WHITTINGTON, Lord Mayor of London,

JOAN OF ARC,

WILLIAM TELL,

POCAHONTAS,

EVANGELINE,

YOUNG GEORGE WASHINGTON,

THE BOY OF MODERN STORY (boy of 12).

The Myths of History
(boys and girls of from 12 to 15).

[Suit the costumes to the characters — with the following suggestions: Washington should be represented as a boy with his hatchet, not as a military hero; make the Boy of Modern Story the impersonation of a sensa-

tional boy-hero, with slouch hat, red shirt, with as much of "blood-and-thunder" style as possible — in short, let him be a typical, modern young desperado. The ages stated are meant only as a guide in selecting the actors.]

FRIENDS OR FOES?

[A FOREST scene, or rocky pass. Loud piano, or flourish of trumpets. Enter Fleur de Lys, the herald, preceded by standard-bearer, and followed by pages and guards. He advances front and unrolls a large proclamation. Attendants stand right and left.]

FLEUR DE LYS (*slowly, and in a loud, official voice*).

Hear ye, hear ye, hear ye! Thus Clio, Muse of History,
Doth proclamation make to circumvent a mystery.

(*Reads Proclamation.*)

WHEREAS: We hear with pain that certain base pretenders,
For many years have vexed our leal and true defenders,
And in a measure spoiled the reading of the masses,
Corrupting thus our schools and all our History classes,—

THEREFORE: We do withdraw the mercy of the State,
And do proclaim them all—outlaws and reprobate.

And, furthermore, do place a price upon the head

Of each rebellious myth, captured—alive or dead.

Thus Fleur de Lys, the Herald of Clio, Muse of History,
Posts these suspicious characters as Partisans of Mystery.

Item: One William Tell, who claims, without a show of reason,
He shot an apple off his son and dabbled some in treason;

Item: One Pocahontas, who claims, 't is proved quite wrongly,
She saved the life of one John Smith by interceding strongly;

Item: One Emperor Nero, who claims, the records spurning,

He fiddled on the walls of Rome while all
the town was burning;

Item: One maid—Joan of Arc—who claims
she'll undertake

To prove she whipped the English hosts and
perished at the stake;

Item: One young George Washington, who
claims (and won't he catch it!)

A strange conglomeration of a cherry-tree
and hatchet;

Item: One named Evangeline, a maid peripa-
tetic,

Who claims a vanished Lover and a Story
most pathetic;

Item: One Richard Whittington, who claims
a doubtful story

Of how a cat and London Bells brought him
both wealth and glory;

Item: One Dido, royal dame, who claims a
Lover and Fire;

The Lover fled, while she ('t is said) burned
on her funeral-pyre.

These all are myths! Let none escape! So
end all tools of mystery.

Long live the State! Long live the
Truth!

Signed: Clio, Muse of History.

[Fleur de Lys fixes this proclamation in some promi-
nent place—central—and retires with attendants.
Spirited march. Then enter, from opposite side, the
eight Myths. Joining hands, they dance gleefully in a
circle, and then moving forward say (or sing, if practi-
cable) in chorus]:

Gay and free,

Fair to see,

Roving myths we seem to be.

Myths in fact,

Still we act,

Just as if with truths we're packed.

Oh, what fun,

When we're done,

Just to see opinions run.

This day, so!—

(swaying to right)

Next day, no!—

(swaying to left)

Through the histories still we go.

All endeavor,

Fruitless ever,

Fact from Fiction to dis sever.

[Dido spies the proclamation and starts in dismay.
Each myth solemnly draws his neighbor by the hand to
the paper. They all read, silently, with uplifted hands,
to slow music, and then, turning, come slowly forward
and say (or sing) in chorus]:

I—de—clare,

What—a—scare,

All our names are posted there!

(Repeating slowly and solemnly, head on hand.)

All—our—names—are—post—ed—there!

(Then follows, line by line, this lament.)

WASHINGTON.

From pillar to post,

JOAN OF ARC.

And pillar to post,

WHITTINGTON.

We're hustled and hurried so,—

EVANGELINE.

Badgered and worried so,—

NERO.

Flustered and flurried so,—

POCAHONTAS.

That at the most,

Little remains for us,—

WILLIAM TELL.

Life has but pains for us,—

DIDO.

Pleasure fast wanes for us,—

ALL *(in chorus)*.

All joy is lost.

WASHINGTON.

No one believes in us;—

JOAN OF ARC.

All see but thieves in us;—

WHITTINGTON.

History grieves in us;—

EVANGELINE.

Vain is our boast.

NERO.

For we are flurried so,—

POCAHONTAS.

Badgered and worried so,—

WILLIAM TELL.

Hustled and hurried so

DIDO.

From pillar to post.

ALL *(in chorus)*.

Hustled and hurried from pillar to post.

[They scatter as if about to run away. Then Joan of Arc, standing central, waves her sword and says:]

JOAN OF ARC (*imperiously*).

Here let us stand!
On every hand,
We 're only scorned and flouted.
Let each proclaim
His acts and name
Shall never more be doubted.

(*They all flock round her.*)

WASHINGTON (*solemnly*).

Year after year,
Our deeds have stood,—
For good or ill — for ill or good.
Why should we now be cast aside?
Why should the world our claims deride,

Year after year,

Year after year?

EVANGELINE (*tearfully*).

Ah, woe is me!
A home destroyed;
A lover lost;
The world a void!
I wander and search all the uni-
verse through
For Gabriel —

NERO (*interrupting contemptuously*).

There, my young friend, that will do!
You know you are only a fiction poetic
Manufactured to work up a rôle sym-
pathetic.

But think how I,
On the walls of Rome,
Saw my minions fly,
And the hot flames come;
While caring naught, in royal glee,
I fiddled away —

POCAHONTAS (*interrupting hastily*).

— Oh, fiddle-de-dee!

My ancestors roamed the Virginia woods,
Savage and free in their haughtiest moods,
Long ere you fiddled down
Your stuffy Roman town.

But I (*proudly*) gave Captain Smith his
life —

DIDO (*interrupting plaintively*).

And I was great Æneas's wife!
Æneas wise, Æneas brave,
Who to the world an empire gave.

But I, alas, who saw him come —

WHITTINGTON (*interrupting flippantly*).

Oh, yes — you soon were Dido dumb!

But we 've heard that once,

And we 've heard it twice —

In fact, I think we 've heard it thrice.

But pshaw! what was that

To my trusty cat,

Who killed the Turkish Sultan's mice?

He cleared the palace —

WILLIAM TELL (*interrupting*).

Yes — that 's so!

But then we 've heard *that*, too, you know.

What good does it do?

I might tell, too,

How my arrow I drew

And Gesler I slew —

But what is the use?

It 's just a misuse

Of our mythical powers

To waste so the hours.

To the world let us make all our boasts and
our glories,

But don't — pray don't — force on each other
our stories!

[A noise outside. The Myths, with hand to ear, listen
intently, and then say, or sing:]

ALL (*in chorus*).

Hark, hark, hark! We had better go

To some cavern dark — sorrowfully — slow.

Footsteps now we hear,

If we 're found, we fear

We shall all be hounded,

Badgered, pestered, pounded,

By the stern Prætorians,—

Clio's strict historians.

(*Exeunt hastily, right.*)

[Enter, cautiously, left, Detective, Policeman, Elec-
trician. They search, carefully, with dark lanterns and
say to each other:]

S-st! S-st! S-st!

DETECTIVE.

I surely heard a noise.

ALL (*as before*).

S-st! S-st! S-st!

POLICEMAN.

It may have been the boys.

DETECTIVE (*sees Proclamation*).

Why, what is this?

(The others hurry toward it.)

POLICEMAN *(scanning it)*.

'T is Clio's Proclamation.

ELECTRICIAN.

Is it a big reward?

DETECTIVE.

Let 's get some information.

POLICEMAN.

She 'd pay us well, if we
Could clear them from the nation.

[Low music while the three put their heads together in consultation. Let the music grow more triumphant as they shake hands as if agreed upon a plan and then locking arms, they walk forward, central.]

DETECTIVE *(exhibiting his badge)*.

I 'm the Detective shrewd!
Wherever I intrude
I ferret out all mystery
For Clio, Muse of History.

POLICEMAN *(brandishing his club)*.

I 'm the Policeman stout!
I seize and hustle out
Each vague and vagrant mystery
For Clio, Muse of History.

ELECTRICIAN *(displaying his square box, which he holds gingerly in his hand, and on which should be painted "DYNAMITE!")*.

I am the Electrician!
And solemn is my mission;—
For I explode each mystery
For Clio, Muse of History.

DETECTIVE.

Come, let us search the spot, we've lots to do
Before we find these tramps.

(They search cautiously.)

Not here?

NERO *(sneezing, behind the scenes)*.

Ker—choo!

[Detective, Policeman, Electrician start in astonishment, and then say all together:]

Ha-ha; ha-ha; ha-ha!

We think—we heard—a sneeze!

DETECTIVE *(pointing, right)*.

The villains are in there.

POLICEMAN *(brandishing his club, but not going in, calls loudly)*.

Down, traitors, on your knees!

DETECTIVE.

Now the reward is ours!

POLICEMAN *(to Electrician)*.

Get out your dynamite.

ELECTRICIAN.

Guard all the paths and passes;

Let none escape by flight.

[Exit the Electrician, right. The Detective and Policeman watch his motions hopefully—but cautiously.]

DETECTIVE *(enthusiastically)*.

See, now he sets his batteries.

What science! What simplicity!

Don't ask him what the matter is—

Just wait and hear him scatter his

Dynamic electricity.

POLICEMAN *(excitedly)*.

Now close your ears, good people—tight!—

The poles are *not* corroded.

That current starts the dynamite.

Bang! Bang!!— *(Explosion heard.)*

DETECTIVE *(waving his hat)*.

Ho, victory!

POLICEMAN *(lifting his hands)*.

What a sight!

POLICEMAN AND DETECTIVE *(link arms and swagger front)*.

The Myths—are all—exploded!

(Exeunt right—loud music.)

[While the Myths are behind the scenes let them throw tattered cloaks over their suits, so that when they now appear they may look very dilapidated—some with hats off, some with arms in sling, some with bandaged eye or head, as if just from an explosion or accident].

MYTHS *(entering hurriedly to quick music, followed by Detective, Policeman, and Electrician driving them in. They speak in chorus)*.

Our time has come!

Alas, alas!

Now, is not this

A sorry pass?

Toll, toll the bells,

Romance is dead;

Toll, toll the bells,

Our joy has fled.

Weep o'er our fate—

All kins—all kiths,

For we are now

Exploded Myths!

POLICEMAN (*authoritatively*).

Now to the palace where in solemn court,
The mighty Clio waits our full report.
Close up the ranks, there! March, and cease
your prating,
For lo, the prison-cart outside the door is
waiting.

(*Exeunt all to slow music.*)

[Here let the change to the court-room be made by simply removing the coverings from the furniture. There should be a raised platform with two large chairs,—one for Clio and one for Chief Justice,—and before the platform a long table, with chairs for the lawyers; now enter in procession, Herald, Standard-bearer, Clio and her pages, Lord Chief Justice, Crier of the Court, Guards, the State's Attorney, Portia Pleadwell, and clerks with law-books, etc. Clio and Chief Justice seat themselves. Crier stands central. Pages, guards, etc. group themselves appropriately. Standard rests behind Clio's chair. Opposing counsel and their clerks sit at either end of the table and arrange their law-books, papers, etc., with legal importance. Appropriate music during the assembling.]

CRIER.

Hats off in court!
Keep silence all!
Oyez; oyez; oyez!
Heed now the Crier's call!

All persons having business in this High Court
of Truth,
Are herewith now directed, on pain of fine or
ruth,
To state their business plainly, devoid of legal
mystery,
Before the Lord Chief Justice and Clio, Muse
of History.

THE STATE'S ATTORNEY (*rising*).

May it please the Court, and you, Serene and
Sovereign Lady:
The State hath apprehended some characters
called "shady,"
To place before the bar, that you may justice
measure,
The criminals who long have braved your
dread displeasure.
Therefore I now demand, and look for no
denial,
That they be brought forthwith to stand upon
their trial.

LORD CHIEF JUSTICE.

Bring in the prisoners! Who aids them in
their stress?

PORTIA (*rising*).

I do, your Lordship.
LORD CHIEF JUSTICE.

And are you ready?

PORTIA.

Yes.

[Enter, guarded by police, the Myths all tattered and torn; with them, the Detective, Policeman, and Electrician.]

CLIO (*looking at Myths in great surprise*).

How now! how now! who are these tatter-
demalions?

POLICEMAN (*bowing*).

Why these, so please your Grace, are just those
same rapsallions.

CLIO.

Well, but why come they here in such a sad
condition?

DETECTIVE (*bowing*).

All due, so please your Grace, to your Grace's
Electrician.

ELECTRICIAN (*bowing*).

I placed a charge of Dynamite,—
You know what that foreboded,—
And with a storage battery
These vagrant Myths exploded.

LORD CHIEF JUSTICE (*who meanwhile has been
glancing over the papers containing the
charges against the prisoners*).

These papers seem correct. The court will
need
To hear the arguments. Counsel may pro-
ceed.

[The prisoners stand at right securely guarded. The
State's Attorney rises to address the Court.]

THE STATE'S ATTORNEY.

May it please the Court, and likewise you,
Serene and Gracious Madam:
These vagrants have been roaming round—
say, since the days of Adam.
They're counterfeiters; thieves, who'd give
us spurious coin for golden;
They've built their claims for countenance on
certain legends olden;
And, on a base of history that has a grain of
warrant in it,
Have spread corruption through your realm
and told their tales abhorrent in it.
There's not a boy, there's not a girl, in all
your History Classes,

But firmly, now, accepts as Fact each Fiction
as it passes.

Because they 've heard of Washington they
must believe the hatchet;

Because they 've heard of William Tell the
apple too must match it.

They still hold on to Whittington and what
the bells were calling,

They find the Pocahontas Myth entrancing
and enthralling.

And Dido and Evangeline, Joan of Arc and
Nero

Have kept their pulses changing oft, from
boiling-point to zero.

Not all the facts of late research, not all the
proofs we 've cited,

Not all the controversial tests your scholars
have invited;

Not all the light that science brings to bear
on ancient story,

Can break the hold these Myths have gained
on childhood's love of glory.

So, for the State which they have braved; for
you, most gracious Madam,

Whose wise behests they 've oft defied, just
when you thought you had 'em;

For this grave Court; for guileless youth;
and for the truth of History,

I press for justice, quick and sharp, to break
the sway of Mystery.

[He sits down. The Myths appear down-hearted.
Clio looks at them severely and says, enthusiastically,
addressing the State's attorney]:

CLIO.

Well put, my trusty counsellor, best of our
State's defenders.

What now can Portia Pleadwell say to help
these base pretenders?

LORD CHIEF JUSTICE.

The Court will weigh the State's appeal with
calmest independence,

But waits to hear the counsel's plea who
speaks for these defendants.

PORTIA (*rising*).

May it please the Court, and also you, O Clio,
Muse most glorious,

Who see these suppliants at your feet, as
here you reign victorious,

I ask for clemency — no more. I stand here
interceding

For these poor outcasts of your realm — here,
now, for mercy pleading.

I ask for these my clients, then, but mercy, —
pure and simple, —

That mercy that adorns your Grace, as does
each dainty dimple.

Who are these Myths, so-called, I ask, but
tutors come to teach us

(However rosy-colored all) true lessons that
should reach us.

How truth may triumph, justice live, and valor
grow more glorious;

How love may weep, and wisdom sleep, and
virtue shine victorious;

How truths excel, and worth will tell, and
good and evil wrangle;

How life's weak thread may snap in dread, or
snarl and twist and tangle;

All this, 't is thought, these myths have taught,
each thus with wisdom shining,

And each may still, set forth with skill, help
to the world's refining.

I rest my case. But first, I beg that I may
be permitted

(Before I ask that by the Court my clients be
acquitted)

To introduce in evidence one fact that has a
bearing

Upon my case —

THE STATE'S ATTORNEY (*risés and interrupts*).

Oh, I object! I know your

Lordship's sharing,

Alike with me, and with her Grace, the
deepest detestation

For these convicted criminals —

PORTIA (*interrupting spiritedly*).

Hold! hear my protestation

Against your language —

THE STATE'S ATTORNEY (*interrupting*).

Why?

PORTIA.

Because these myths

are *not* convicted!

LORD CHIEF JUSTICE (*rapping for order*).

Counsel *must* cease these hasty words to which
they seem addicted.

PORTIA (*to Lord Chief Justice*).

Am I sustained?

LORD CHIEF JUSTICE.

The Court decides that you may now employ
New evidence to prove your case.

PORTIA.

Crier, bring in the Boy!

(*Exit CRIER.*)

[Enter Crier with the BOY OF MODERN STORY guarded
by two policeman.]

PORTIA (*pointing to Boy, as she addresses the
Court*).

This bold brigand, may it please the Court,
and you, most noble Clio,
Infests our broad and glorious land from
Eastport to Ohio.

Where'er a school-house lifts its head, where'er
a postman hurries,

This Boy, here put in evidence, comes with
his woes and worries;

Comes with his spurious bravery and his feats
of doubtful daring;

In papers cheap his poisons steep, nor youth
nor maiden sparing.

He reeks with strings of "Injun" scalps; he's
crammed with stolen dollars,

He boasts and prates of youthful crimes, and
counts his hosts of scholars.

The "Bandit Boy of Gory Gulch," the "Ter-
ror of the Prairie,"

The "Avenger of the Midnight Clan," — 't is
thus his titles vary.

The boys he lures with stories wild, the girls
with "raven tresses" —

This ghoul of children's literature, this imp
of sordid presses;

Beside *this* scamp, these harmless Myths stand
out in radiant glory,

Arrayed in Truth's own panoply, enriched
with song and story.

"Look on this picture — and on this!" For
childhood's sake, I pray you,

Shall Romance stay, with gentle sway, or Vice
remain to slay you?

(*Bows to the Court and sits down.*)

CLIO (*rising, much moved*).

Let Romance live! O Myths, go free; shine
out in full resplendence!

[The Myths tear off their tattered cloaks, bandages,
etc., and disclose their suits as first worn, in good order
and condition.]

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CLIO (*to LORD CHIEF JUSTICE, appealingly*).

I beg your Lordship's pardon, but —

LORD CHIEF JUSTICE (*rising, and with dignity*).

I find for the defendants.

(*To the MYTHS.*)

You are acquitted!

(*The Myths shake hands with each other joy-
fully.*)

CLIO.

Myths, come here!

PORTIA.

Her grace desires to meet you.

CLIO (*imperiously, to court officers.*)

Remove that boy. Load him with chains!

[The boy is led off by police. Clio descends from her
station and comes toward the Myths with extended
hands.]

With love and hope I greet you!

Once more shine out in radiant robes;
once more roam gay and lightly

Through History's pages — oft too dull —
and make them glow more brightly.

In roughest guise the diamond lies, and
Truth's sublimest teaching

Was told in simple parables, that savored
naught of preaching.

And as each life its romance has, and
every life its sorrow,

So History sage may deck its page with
gems which Truth must borrow.

Let wise men show, as on we go, how tricks
from truths to sever,

But we'll stay all in Fancy's thrall;

O Myths, live on forever!

DETECTIVE, POLICEMAN, ELECTRICIAN (*coming
forward, insinuatingly*).

And — our — reward?

CLIO.

If 't was withheld, 't would surely be a
pity.

What shall it be? I have it! Yes, — The
Freedom of the City,

I ask no thanks. It shall be yours, most
zealous of officials,

Presented in a plush-lined box, and stamped
with my initials.

For by your aid these friends I made — though
not as you intended.

Your batteries, correctly charged, would soon
my Myths have ended.

[Characters form half-circle. Clio in center. All sing with spirit this chorus (to tune in "Moore's Melodies"):]

Sound the loud timbrel o'er Error's dark sea,
For Romance has triumphed and Fiction is free.
Sing, for the pride of the Gradgrinds is broken —
Their facts without sweetness, their dry-as-dust phrase.
How vain was their boast that the lessons we've
spoken,
Should find no defenders and merit no praise.

Sound the loud timbrel, etc.

Sing for great Clio, our patron adored,
Her scroll is our buckler, her pen is our sword;
Now shall we live to tell children our story,
Now shall new hope from our messages spring!
For without us is History shorn of her glory;
We are saved! and the world with our praises shall
ring!

Sound the loud timbrel, etc.

(Curtain.)

[Clio advances toward audience; extends her hands and says:]

CLIO.

And now will you, O friends most true, who've
watched the whole proceeding,

Give but *your* sanction to the case as shown
in Portia's pleading?

Let children know, as children grow, myths,
stories, wholesome fancies —

That, based on Fact, are Romance-packed, and
bright with dreamy glances.

Let children know how friend or foe may tell
of shame or glory,

With watchful eye all error spy, but keep the
MYTHS OF STORY.

All begin again the first stanza of the "timbrel" song
of triumph as curtain falls.

AN OLD DOLL.

BY MARGARET W. BISLAND.

THIS summer, for the first time in her life, Hepzibah sat for her photograph. We went to the studio of a friend of mine, who is a very clever amateur photographer, and had asked me to let her sit for a picture. We set her up in a big arm-chair, told her please to wear a pleasant expression, and now you see Hepzibah just as she is, for the photograph is a striking likeness. Of course you will not think her pretty; but don't laugh at her faded, wrinkled cheeks, hollow eyes, and bald head, for Hepzibah is no longer young. Why, she was seventy years old last Christmas, and is entitled to respect by reason of her age if of nothing else; and I think she would feel sensitive to ridicule, though she is only a doll.

She became a doll one Christmas in a little shop in the old town of Portland, Maine. Seventy years ago, dolls with wax heads were expensive and not nearly so pretty as the ones we have now. Their bodies were long and stiff, without joints. Their shoes and clothes were sewed on, and they had no accomplishments,

such as turning their heads on a spring and saying "Mamma" and "Papa" when a machine was wound up inside. The little girls, in those days, played mostly with home-made dolls called rag-babies, and I think perhaps they loved these cloth children quite as hard and found as much comfort in them as the little girls nowadays find in the wonderful toys brought from Europe.

The same Christmas that Hepzibah was made into a doll, a little girl called Polly, who also lived in Portland, told her mother she wanted Santa Claus (she was only five years old then, and believed in Santa Claus) to bring her a doll; not a rag baby,—she had three of those,—but a beautiful wax one with real yellow hair, blue eyes, and a dress just like the one Polly herself wore. The mother smiled a bit at this request, but promised to speak to Santa Claus about it, and then went the next day and bought the handsomest doll in the city. It cost more than any of the others, for, by pushing and pulling a wire on the left side of the body, its eyes

would close and open, a rare talent for a doll then. She was taken to a dressmaker, and Polly's mother ordered the woman to make the gown on the most fashionable pattern and not to spare expense. So the dressmaker did it. She sewed the clothes by hand, and cut the petticoat from a piece of fine homespun linen. She made little red silk shoes and laced them up with red thread; whipped thread lace on the edge of the queer-looking pantalettes, and stitched two rows of red wool braid on the full brown linen skirt. A bit of brightly colored ribbon held by a small silver buckle clasped the neat waist, tiny feather pillows tucked under the leg-o'-mutton sleeves made them puff out in a most stylish manner, and, as a last touch of elegance, a narrow pink ribbon was run through the yellow curls and tied in a bow on top of the head.

So she looked the Christmas morning Polly found her, in the top of a long stocking; the loveliest doll in Portland, with such rosy cheeks, red lips, and smiling blue eyes that Polly took her at once to her tender, motherly little heart and named her Hepzibah.

After Hepzibah came, the rag babies, "Sarah," "Jane," and "Nancy," were entirely neglected, and very soon found their way to the garret, for Hepzibah had taken their place in their little mother's affections. Polly never went to bed at night that her beloved dolly was not also tucked snugly into her cradle and sung gently to sleep. The two always went a-visiting together, to doll tea-parties, picnics, and the like. Here Hepzibah was admired by the other small mothers, and Polly always said, with an affectionate kiss, that hers was "the most perfect child in the world!" In the summer they went blackberrying, for rides on the hay, and to play mud-cakes by the brook; until at last Polly grew to be a big girl, and then to a young lady with her skirts to the floor, and her yellow curls pinned on top of her pretty head. She was too old to play dolls any more; but she did not forget poor Hepzibah, who began to feel very lonely. Finally, one day Polly said she was to be married; and Hepzibah went to the wedding, and saw the ceremony, if she did not hear it; for Polly insisted on having her brought to the parlor and put conspicuously on the mantel.

After that Hepzibah never saw nor heard any-

thing for a great many years, for she was put into a trunk and went traveling, she never knew where, till, at last, the trunk was stored in a garret and was not opened for such a long time that she went to sleep, like the princess in the fairy tale, and did not wake up for twenty years.

When I was a little girl I went to live at my grandfather's place, in the State of Missis-



HEPZIBAH.

sippi. It was a very old-fashioned house in a very old-fashioned neighborhood, and among the neighbors were two widow ladies. They lived all alone in an old plantation-house, with only a big dog for companion, and sometimes I went with my mother to see them and spend the day. I usually took my rag-doll "Matilda" with me, for although she was an ugly person,

having cloth hair and a face marked out in ink, I was fond of her, and we had very good times together. One day when I was at this house I sat on the front steps, playing "flower ladies," and the oldest of the sisters, whose name was Mrs. Powers, called me to go up to the garret with her. Now, I had always wished to see what was in that garret, so Matilda and I, full of curiosity, followed Mrs. Powers up the narrow steps. We opened a little window to let in some light, and saw two big spinning-wheels that had come all the way from Portland many years before; and in one corner were some queer leather trunks that had not been opened for years. Mrs. Powers unlocked one, took out some funny muslin gowns, all yellow with age, and, finally, a box which she said was for me.

When I opened it, what do you suppose I found? Why, Hepzibah, of course! Just as you see her here. The belt and buckle at her waist had been lost long ago, her poor pretty eyes had fallen back in her head, the beautiful hair had nearly all fallen off, and the color was gone from her cheeks, except two little spots of pink that made her wrinkled face look like a dried little winter apple. When I took her in my arms Mrs. Powers cried a bit, and as we sat on the trunk she told me of the time when she was little Polly and lived with her dear Hepzibah in Portland, how happy she was then, and how she had known Miss Sophie May, who wrote the Prudy and Dotty books, and even "Prudy" and "Dotty" themselves, till it grew quite dark and time for me to go home.

I took Hepzibah with me, but she had grown too old to play and could only lie patiently in a box, and was sometimes shown to visitors. By and by, I grew up, too, and went away from the old place, carrying Hepzibah with me to the city of New Orleans, and last summer she went to a fancy-dress ball given to a number of little children. Prizes had been offered the girls for the largest doll, the smallest doll, the oldest doll, and the ugliest doll. There are no small children in our family, but our next-door neighbor has a charming little daughter who was going to the ball dressed as a fisher-girl. Little Edna's mother asked me to lend Hepzibah to try for the prize for the oldest doll. So I took her from the box where she had lain so long, shook out her

faded skirts, gave her a little advice about company manners, and a kiss, and sent her off in the arms of the fisher-girl to dance on the lawn to the sweet music of a hand-organ.

There were hundreds of dolls present, from the great Paris bisque baby who was wound up with a key and wore a silk gown and lace cap, to the tiny china doll with gilt shoes and queer blue eyes. There were big wax dolls with lots of curly hair, wearing baby-clothes, black dolls with woolly heads, and a few boy dolls. They drank lemonade and ate bonbons,—at least their jolly little mothers did for them, as sweets don't agree with such young children, you know,—and when the party was nearly over, the dolls went bashfully up for exhibition before several gentlemen, the chosen judges. Poor Hepzibah, I dare say, wished she had stayed at home in her box. It was so long since she had been into society, and dolls of to-day have very different manners from the dolls she had known. She felt that her gown was so faded and unfashionable, and every one laughed at the leg-o'-mutton sleeves and her empty eyes, and she almost trembled when one kindly faced judge picked her up. He examined the little ticket pinned to the hem of her shabby skirt, and read,

"Hepzibah,

Seventy years old,

Born in Portland, Maine."

"Poor old dolly," he murmured, and handled her with respectful fingers, honoring her years and lack of hair.

She did n't take the prize; a wooden Egyptian doll got it, but the judge held Hepzibah up before the crowd of children and made a little speech, saying that she was the oldest American doll, and told some of her history, and when she came back to me she was greatly excited, but happy to find herself once more in her box. If she could speak, I think she would say she was glad she lost the prize, for not even a doll likes to be older and uglier than every one else.

Last year she took another long journey. I put her box in my trunk, and we two came by steamer all the way from New Orleans to New York. And now she hopes that her journeys are over, for she is too old to travel and wishes to retire into quiet and peace for the rest of her days.



FIFTEEN MINUTES WITH A CYCLONE.

(A True Story.*)

BY M. LOUISE FORD.

"SPEAKING of cyclones," remarked Mr. Wilson to the company about the library-fire, one cold November evening, "I think I can equal any story you have told with my own experience in a genuine 'twister.'"

As we had already heard some surprising stories, a general exclamation from young and old demanded the story, and, after a little urging, Mr. Wilson began:

"We were living then, my wife and the eight children (of whom the youngest was but four months old), in Malcom, a pretty little village about five miles from the city of Grinnell, Iowa.

"The farm was as attractive as it could well be—acre after acre of rolling prairie land, a fine garden, and a young and thriving orchard. My cousin had lived on the place for several years, but when his business made it necessary for him to go farther West, he had persuaded me

to come out and take the farm. I had hoped to go West for several years, and I thought this an excellent opportunity, so we moved out, and had been living there about four years when this big blow came.

"It was in 1882, on the 27th of June; you will see why I have no trouble in remembering the date.

"It had been an exceedingly hot day, not a cloud to be seen, with the sun beating fiercely down, and not a breath of air stirring. We sat out on the porch after supper, trying to find a cool place. The clouds were beginning to gather, and it looked as if there might be a shower. The three little ones went early to bed, and in spite of the oppressive heat were soon fast asleep.

"It could n't have been far from eight o'clock when I heard a sound which I at first thought was thunder. The others noticed it, too, and,

* See author's letter, p. 452.

as it grew louder, a terrible rushing sound came with it, and we looked at one another in silence for a minute, and then ran to where we could look out westward.

"My heart almost stopped beating, when I saw coming toward us with terrific speed a black, funnel-shaped cloud, the rush and roar accompanying it growing louder every minute.

"*'Run for the cellar!'*" I cried. My wife ran and seized the baby, and I caught up the two

was the cat; imagine my surprise when I found it was Charlie, our five-year-old boy!

"He was terribly frightened, and as amazed as I was, to find himself not alone in the well. The wonder was that we were not both of us impaled on that iron pipe; how we escaped it I can not understand.

"The cyclone had passed on, and a terrific, steady wind was blowing. I could hear it roar above our heads; and by the flashes of light-

ning I could see that rain fell in torrents. We were both so wet we did n't mind the little extra water that splashed down on us, and as soon as possible I raised Charlie to my shoulders, and by aid of the pipe managed to work my way up to the top of the well. This took some little time, and the wind and rain had nearly ceased when I set my feet on solid earth again, and found we were unhurt.

"But such a scene as I looked upon I hope never to see again! And I dreaded to look about me for fear of worse things. Evi-

dently the house had been lifted bodily from its foundations and dashed down, and everything that had not been carried away by the wind lay about the yard; many of the great timbers were found rods away driven into the earth, as if they had been but tent-pegs.

"Soon I heard my wife's voice calling, and I was a happy man when I found her and two of our little ones, terribly wet and frightened, but unhurt.

"But where was the baby?

"I called the names of the other children, as we ran frantically here and there to find some trace of them. Nellie, the eldest, came running from the orchard with the baby in her arms. She said she had picked him up from the wet ground where he was lying, and he had not even cried. She had found herself there, but that was all she knew about it; indeed, none of us could give an account of our wanderings after we left the cellar door.

"Soon we heard the boys' voices, and found that they were in the cellar; the cyclone in lift-



other children from the bed. There was no time to lose.

"The one who first reached the cellar door—it was one of the older children—had just time to seize the knob, nothing more, when—crash! such a terrific noise! I felt myself lifted in the air and thought my time had come. The next thing I knew, I felt the splash of cold water in my face. I must have lost consciousness, but the water revived me, and in a moment I knew where I was.

"I had come down head first into the well!"

"The water was some ten feet deep. I was thoroughly at home in the water, though I was n't used to diving in that fashion, and I managed to right myself and come up head first.

"The well was not more than three feet across, and the pump had been broken short off and carried away, leaving a two-inch iron pipe standing straight up in the middle.

"I was very nearly out of breath when I came to the top of the water. My hands touched something floating on the surface. I thought it

ing the body of the house had taken up a part of the foundation (which was of large stones laid in cement), and then dropped it. The floor came down a little askew, and a stove, organ, and a heavy desk had slid off into the cellar.

"In some way or other the boys reached the cellar, too, probably before the floor fell, for the flooring made a protection over their heads. They came out safe and sound, though it was difficult to set them free.

"It seems that my wife had found herself on the ground, and by the flashes of lightning had seen Charlie standing not far from her. As the wind was blowing a gale, she called to him to lie down flat on the ground; but the next time the lightning came she could not see him, and supposed the wind must have swept him off his feet into the well. Providentially, I was there to rescue him.

"Well, we found ourselves all safe and unhurt,—except a few slight bruises not worth mentioning, after what we had been through,—and you can understand that we were not only a very happy family but that we were a very thankful family, too.

"Our home was scattered along on the prairie for a mile or more; there was n't enough left of it to make a large hen-house. The barn was gone, also; but, to our surprise, there stood the thirty head of cattle tied to the stanchions

(only one of them so injured that it had to be killed), and my two horses were unharmed.

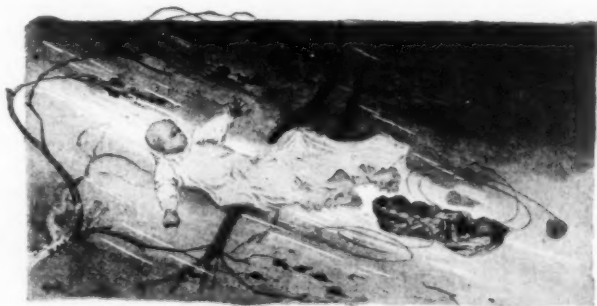
"The big wagon was in the yard, and had in some way escaped destruction, so we hitched up the horses and started to find shelter.

"Our clothing was rather the worse for wear, but we did not stop to think about trifles. We could see the terrible work of the cyclone as we rode along; trees twisted off or torn up by the roots, and buildings demolished. The rain had come down in such torrents that next day the trees and fences looked as if there had been a high tide, the leaves and straw which clung to them a foot or more above the ground showing at what height the water had stood.

"You remember how much damage the cyclone did in Grinnell, and if you could have seen the sight we looked upon as we rode into the city, you would realize as never before what an appalling thing a cyclone is.

"We were well taken care of, and after a while I even ventured to build again; but my garden was gone, my orchard was ruined, and there was constant dread whenever there was a cloud in the sky, and at length my wife and I concluded we could n't bear to stay any longer. We came East again, and here we mean to remain.

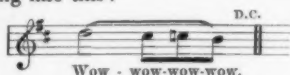
"Such having been our experience, no one can blame us for not wishing to repeat it. Certainly we could not hope to be as fortunate another time."



THE SCREECH-OWL.

BY ERNEST E. THOMPSON.

OFTEN in the evening, an hour or so after sunset, the outdoor naturalist may hear from the shade of a thick hemlock, or from a grove in some ravine, a prolonged, quavering note something like this :



Though tinged with melancholy, it is soft and musical, and it is indeed, as Lowell says, one of the sweetest sounds in nature. And yet, this is the characteristic note of the bird which has gained, for reasons unknown to me, the unpleasant name of "screech-owl."

This pretty little owl, perhaps the prettiest of the family, is but slightly longer than a robin, but looks much larger on account of the fluffy feathers and large head. It is found in temperate North America and is quite common in most



of the Eastern States. Generally it lives in the woods, but it is fond also of frequenting barns, old orchards, and groves near the water.

It is very courageous and can kill other birds as large as itself; but usually it preys on mice and grasshoppers. Its mousing abilities are so wonderful that it has been aptly named "the feathered cat"; and its great yellow eyes, ear-like tufts, and night-prowling habits all unite to make the name suitable.

Many persons are so fond of this little owl that they take pains to encourage it about their houses. The readiest way is to place in the trees, at different parts of the farm, nesting-boxes like small pigeon-houses. One might be put in the orchard, another in the woods near the water, if there is any, and another in the gable of the barn. Unless there is some unusual cause to keep away these musical mousers, not



very many seasons will pass before they avail themselves of the comfortable quarters provided.

The soft call already described is really the love-note of this owl. It is its song just as much as the prolonged chantings of any of our common birds are their songs; and it will be heard oftenest in the early spring, although it is not unusual for this owl to sing nearly the whole year round.

Here, then, we have in this little owl an example of bravery, industry, and cheerfulness; and these qualities are shown by the very bird of all others that is least credited with them; for, if names and reputations are to count for anything, surely the very last bird to which we would look for an example of courage and merriment would be an owl, and above all, a screech-owl.

NORAY AND THE ARK.

BY HARRY STILLWELL EDWARDS.



UNCLE DICK sat out in the pine thicket near his cabin, busy with his basket-making, for the cotton was in the boll, and something to put the soft, white lint in must be ready when the

hands picked it. Within thirty days each picker would be traveling along a row in the field filling the bag hung about his neck, and if the baskets were not on hand to empty in, there would be trouble. The old man had had his strips in soak all night to soften them and render them pliable, and as he worked away, lacing them together firmly, he sang an old plantation hymn that started the echoes far and near. The sun outside was hot upon the fields, but about him was a dense shade, and a little breeze had crept in to keep him cool and set the pines murmuring.

He was a nervous little old man, with a face full of smiles. Somehow he seemed always to think that things were getting on fairly well about him, and that life was not made for regrets and discontent. And so, come what might, the children were always reasonably sure of finding Uncle Dick in a good humor and accommodating, however much he protested against interference.

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This morning he suddenly paused in his labors and lifted his head. A knowing look shone in his face:

"Deir hit is ergin, deir hit is ergin; dem chillun gwine ter mek more trouble!" His sharp ears had not deceived him, for presently there burst in upon him a noisy bevy of youngsters who had come down from the "big house" to gather wild flowers and pay Dick a visit. It was "trouble," sure enough; one wanted a strip for a jumping-hoop, one for a bow, another stuff for a popgun stick; and so on.

"Ain' no use talkin'," said the old man, pushing the youngsters right and left, and gathering up his possessions as rapidly as possible. "'F I gi' yer dat timber, dese hyah baskets ain' gwine ter git done;—*don't* tek dat, Marse Tom; don't yer do hit;—'bliged ter have dat ve'y strip!—Miss Ma'y, *don't*, honey; dat piece b'long right hyah 'twixt dese two what I'm er-holdin' open. Git erway fum hyah de las' one er yer! Don't,—I'm gwine straight up yonner to de big house an' tell ole Miss!"

"Tell us about Noray, then, Uncle Dick." The demand was at once re-enforced by a chorus of voices.

"Now, des lissen at dat! How many times I done tell yer already? How 'm I gwine ter work, ef I fool erlong wid er whole passell er chillun at de same time!"

"But, Uncle Dick, we're not going to bother

you; we will all sit down here on the ground, and you can work and talk, too, just as you always do."

The air was full of "Please, Uncle Dick," uttered in pleading tones, and Dick, apparently restored to good-nature again, was shaking all over.

"What I gwinter tell yer 'bout?"

"Noray! Noray! Noray!"

"Cousin Nellie has never heard it," volunteered a little boy.

"Whar she?" Dick stopped short, despite the alleged pressing nature of his work, and looked quickly around. The youngster pushed a little girl to the front.

"Here she is! Nellie Wimberley, why did n't you say 'howdy' to Uncle Dick?"

The old man appeared to be deeply interested. "Hush!" he said. "Dis ain't Marse Tom Wimb'ley's gal?"

"Yes, she is." It was a chorus again. Dick drew her up to him.

"Lor' bless my soul! But deir hit is, deir hit is! Same eye, same nose, same mouf! It 's de troof! Yo' pa an' me was mighty close, honey, mighty close!—Course, I gwine ter tell yer erbout Noray," he said impatiently, turning in response to the renewed call; "gwine ter tell hit des like I used ter tell 'er pa, 'fo' y' all was born'd. Y' all drop right down deir on the pine straw; I 'm gwine ter set Miss Nellie right up hyah top er dis new basket, des like 'er pa used ter set, an' I bet she ain't gwine ter say nothin' fum de time I start tell I git done. Dem Wimb'leys es quality, and quality es born wid manners." His broad hint to the assembly was not without its effect; but the effect was fleeting. Nellie, with her hand full of wild violets, sat very still, and kept her eyes upon the old man. His face grew soft and full of smiles again.

"Some folks," he said, picking up his strips again, "tells dis story one way, an' some tell hit ermuther. I 'm gwine ter tell hit des like it come ter me straight fum de nigger dat was deir—"

One of the boys laughed.

"Whar yo' manners, chile? Ef deir want no nigger deir, how come niggers heah? Nigger was deir, an' es name was Ham. I heah tell es how es wife named M'randy, but I dunno

'bout dat. Dey was botl. pow'ful skeered fum de time dey got out er sight er lan' till lan' come ergin; ev'ybody know dat, cause niggers was only 'tended ter move 'bout on de water in er *bateau*, an' keep in close ter de willers."

Presently he began, in a peculiar sing-song intonation:

"Noray buil' de ark, an' he buil' 'er strong, he buil' 'er wide, an' he buil' 'er long, an' he put 'er roof on top. Atter he got de work all done, a voice say, 'Let er rain come'; an' er rain hit come. Glory ter de Man! An' hit rain, an' hit rain, an' hit rain! 'T warnt no littl' ha'f-way rain, but er good ole po'-down rain; yes, littl' chillun! Yes! Hit rain forty days and hit rain forty nights! De creeks all riz, an' de ribbers riz, an' de low groun's soon got wet. Den de fiel's went out er sight, an' de hills 'gin ter shake, an' folks cry out fer he'p; but no he'p come. Glory ter de Man!

"Bimeby de lan' all gone, but Noray fix fer dat. He had er pair er evvy kin' o' all de animals an' de reptiles too, an' er ev'yt'ing dat wear fedders. But de fish outside tek kyar dey-selves. An' de ark ride on de waters den, fer he buil' 'er high, an' he buil' 'er strong, an' he buil' 'er wide, an' he buil' 'er long, wid room inside fer all, an' plenty, too, ter eat. Bimeby long cum er dry spell, an' ole Noray he op'n de window an' put es head outside. Nuthin' deir 'cept pu' water far as he could see. Den Noray tek ole Buzzard an' say ter him—"

"Grandma says it *was* a raven; I went and asked her."

Dick looked hard at the bold interrupter.

"Yo' gran'ma es er mighty good 'ooman, honey, but I 'm er-telling de story straight. Mebby raven nuther name fer buzzard. He tek him an' he say: 'G' 'long out er hyah an' fine dat lan'.' An' buzzard flop 'es wing an' fly erway, roun' an' roun', tell bimeby he plumb gone. Den Noray go back en de sittin'-room an' tell es wife:

"Keep er-knittin', honey,
Brer Buzzard gone.
Keep er-knittin', honey,
An' de lan' come erlong.

"But buzzard gone for good an' er-flyin' yit, 'cep'n' when he fine sumpin dead. Ef yer go

out deir an' look up en de sky, spec' yer see 'im still er-searchin' wid 'es eye fer de lan'."

"But Uncle Dick, I 've seen him sitting on a dead pine."

The old man smiled and shook his head. He was prepared.

"No, yer ain't, honey. Hit 'll fool mos' anybody; but dat ole *Missis* Buzzard. An' ef yer look mighty close, yer gwine ter see sumpin dead close by. She know dat de ole man be 'long atter while, an' she gwine ter wait deir fer 'im. An' ain' nobody gwine ter tech dat dead till he come, nuther.—Whar'bouts dat story broke?"

"The buzzard was gone." Several voices supplied the information.

"Atter while Noray git tired er waitin' an' he tek Sist' Dove ter de winder an' he ses: 'Sist' Dove, g' long out er hyah an' fine dat lan'.' An' Sist' Dove flop er wing an' sh' fly, an' sh' fly, but no lan'. An' bimeby she come and circle 'round de ark t'ree time, an' dey hyah 'er sing: 'Coo!

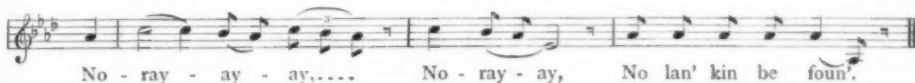
"'Bout dis time de word went 'roun', an' de big dog down en de cellar say, 'Boo! woo! woo!' an' de little dog upstairs say, 'Bow! wow! wow!' an' de cow she low, an' de sheep she bleet, an' de ole goat fairly scream fer joy, 'Baa-a-a-ah! An' de birds 'gin ter sing: but no lan' yit, an' de rooster 'fuse ter crow."

As old Uncle Dick imitated the various animals, Nellie laughed until she almost fell from the basket.

"Den 'long come sumpin floatin' by away out yonder, an' bimeby Noray see hit was de buzzard ridin' on er dead mule all by 'esef, an' he holler out:

"'Whar dat lan'? Oh whar dat lan-n-n'? But Buzzard can't talk, an' Jim Crow, his fust-cousin, up an' say, 'Dat's all de lan' he want. Dat's why he ain' come back ter de Ark-Ark-Ark!'

"But long erbout light nex' day, Noray was er-combin' es hair' 'fo' de glass, when he staggered, an' all de bottles cum er-tumblin' down



Coo! Coo! Noray-ay-ay-ay, ay-ay-ay-Noray-ay-ay-ay. No lan' kin be foun'.' An' Noray put de meal back en de saucer, an' hit de winder-sill wid es fist, an' ses en er loud voice, ses he, 'Sist' Dove, I 's wantin' yer ter g'long erway fum hyah 'bout yo' business an' fine dat glitterin' lan'; an' don't yer come back hyah no mo' tell yer fine hit, sho'.' An' ole Sist' Dove sh' g'long ergin, an' sh' fly, an' sh' fly, an' sh' fly, she do. Sh' fly t'ree days an' sh' fly t'ree nights, an' one mornin' she come back, sh' did, an' light right en de winder an' er green leaf was en 'er mouf. An' sh' sing out: 'Coo! Coo! Coo! Noray-ay-ay-ay-ay-ay, Noray-ay-ay! I 'se foun' de lan'! I 'se foun' de lan'!' Den Noray spill little meal deir fer 'er, an' he say, 'Glory ter de Man!'

fum de she'f. An' des den he hyah de rooster way out on top de pilot-house sing out: 'Ook-kook-kook-kook-koo! Noray-ay-ay-ay-ay-ay, Noray-ay-ay, ole Ark done run ergroun'.' An' Noray drop 'es brush an' say, 'Dah!!! Glory ter de Man!'

"Dat as far as my story goes," said Dick when the children were done laughing, and he was fitting another strip in his basket. "But I once hear er ole man named Black Bill, what used ter live ov'r ter de Bell place, tell hit a little diffunt. He ses dat when Noray run out er de room, de fus' t'ing he seed was dat boy Ham grab both de chickens and break fer de woods; and Black Bill up an' say dat fum dat day ter dis, niggers own all de chickens en de lan'."

CROWDED OUT O' CROFIELD.

BY WILLIAM O. STODDARD.

CHAPTER IV.

MR. MURDOCH had stood on the main street corner, taking notes for the *Eagle*, but now he came back to say the fire was out and it was nearly time for Sunday-school.

It seemed strange to have Sunday-school just after a fire, but the Ogden family and its visitors at once made ready.

It was a quarterly meeting, with general exercises and singing, and a review of the quarter's lessons. The church was full by the hour for opening, and the school had a very prosperous look. Elder Holloway and Mr. Murdoch and two other important men sat in the pulpit, and Joab Spokes, the superintendent, stood in front of them to conduct the exercises. The elder seemed to be glancing benevolently around the room, through his spectacles, but there were some things there which could be seen without glasses, and he must have seen those also.

Miss Glidden looked particularly well and very stately, as she sat in the pew in front of her class (if it were hers), with Mary Ogden. Her first words, on coming in to take command, had been!

"Mary dear, don't go. I really wish you to stay. You may be of assistance."

Mary flushed a little, but she said nothing in reply. She remained, and she certainly did assist, for the girls looked at her almost all the while, and Miss Glidden had no trouble whatever, and nothing to do but to look pleased and beaming and dignified. The elder, it was noticed, seemed to feel special interest in the part taken in the exercises by the class with two teachers, one for show and one for work. He even seemed to see something comical in the situation, and there was positive admiration in a remark he made to Mr. Murdoch:

"She's a true teacher. There's really only

one teacher to that class. She must have been born with a knack for it!"

Elder Holloway, with all his years and experience, had not understood the case of Miss Glidden's class more perfectly than had one young observer at the other end of the church. Jack Ogden could not see so well as those great men in the pulpit, but then he could hear much and surmise the rest.

"All those girls will stand by Molly!" he said to himself. "I hope, it won't be long before school's dismissed," he added.

He had reasons for this hope. He was a little late through lingering to take a curious look at what was left of the fire. The street had a littered look. The barns and stables were wide open, and deserted, for the horses had been led to places of safety. There seemed to be an impression that the hotel was half destroyed; but the damage had not been very great.

A faint, thin film of blue was eddying along the ridge-pole of the kitchen addition. Jack noticed it, but did not know what it meant. A more practiced observer would have known that, hidden from sight, buried in the punk of the dry-rotted timber, was a vicious spark of fire, stealthily eating its way through the punk to the resinous pine.

Jack paid little attention to the tiny smoke-wreath, but he was compelled to pay some attention to the weather. It had been hot from sunrise until noon, and the air had grown heavier since.

"I know what that haze means," said Jack to himself, as he looked toward the Cocahutchie. "There's a thunder-storm coming by and by, and nobody knows just when. I'll be on the look out for it."

For this reason he was glad that he was compelled to find a seat not far from the door of the church. Twice he went out to look at the sky, and the second time he saw banks of

lead-colored clouds forming on the northwestern horizon. Returning he said to several of the boys near the vestibule:

"You 've just time to get home, if you don't want a ducking."

Each boy passed along the warning; and when the school stood up to sing the last hymn, even the girls and the older people knew of the coming storm. There was a brief silence before the first note of the organ, and through that silence nearly everybody could catch the shrill squeak in which little Joe Hawkins tried to speak very low and secretly.

"Deakin Cobb, we want to git aout! We 've just time to git home if we don't want a duckin'."

The hymn started raggedly and in a wrong pitch; and just then the great room grew suddenly darker, and there was a low rumble of thunder.

"Mary Ogden!" exclaimed Miss Glidden, "what *are* you doing? They can't go yet!"

Mary was singing as loudly and correctly as usual, but she was out in the aisle, and the girls of that class were promptly obeying the motion of hand and head with which she summoned them to walk out of the church.

Elder Holloway may have been only keeping time when he nodded his head, but he was looking at Miss Glidden's class.

So was Miss Glidden, in a bewildered way, as if she, like little Bo-peep, were losing her sheep. Mary was following a strong and sudden impulse. Nevertheless, by the time that class was out of its pews the next caught the idea, and believed it a prudent thing to do. They followed in good order, singing as they went.

"The girls out first,—then the boys," said Elder Holloway, between two stanzas. "One class at a time. No hurry."

Darker grew the air. Jack, out in front of the church, was watching the blackest cloud he had ever seen, as it came sweeping across the sky.

The people walked out calmly enough, but all stopped singing at the door and ran their best.

"Run, Molly! Run for home!" shouted Jack, seeing Mary coming. "It's going to be an awful storm."

Inside the church there was much hesitation, for a moment; but Miss Glidden followed her class without delay, and all the rest followed as fast as they could, and were out in half the usual time. Joe Hawkins heard Jack's words to Molly.

"Run, boys," he echoed. "Cut for home! There's a fearful storm coming!"

He was right. Great drops were already falling now and then, and there was promise of a torrent to follow.

"I don't want to spoil these clothes," said Jack, uneasily. "I need these to wear in the city. The storm is n't here yet, though. I'll wait a minute." He was holding his hat on and looking up at the steeple when he said that. It was a very old, wooden steeple, tall, slender, and somewhat rheumatic, and he knew there must be more wind up so high than there was nearer the ground. "It's swinging!" he said suddenly. "I can see it bend! Glad they're all getting out. There come Elder Holloway and Mr. Murdoch. See the elder run! I hope he won't try to get to Hawkins's. He'd better run for our house."

That was precisely the counsel given the good man by the editor, and the elder said:

"I'd like to go there. I'd like to see that clever girl again. Come, Murdoch; no time to lose!"

The blast was now coming lower, and the gloom was deepening.

Flash—rattle—boom—crash! came a glitter of lightning and a great peal of thunder.

"Here it is!" cried Jack. "If it is n't a dry blast!"

It was something like the first hot breath of a hurricane. To and fro swung the tottering old steeple for a moment, and then there was another crash—a loud, grinding, splintering, roaring crash—as the spire reeled heavily down, lengthwise, through the shattered roof of the meeting-house! Except for Mary Ogden's cleverness, the ruins might have fallen upon the crowded Sunday-school. Jack turned and ran for home. He was a good runner, but he only just escaped the deluge following that thunder-bolt.

Jack turned upon reaching the house, and as he looked back he uttered a loud exclamation,

and out from the house rushed all the people who were gathered there.

"Jingo!" Jack shouted. "The old hotel's gone, sure, this time!"

The burrowing spark had smoldered slowly along, until it felt the first fanning of the rising gale. In another minute it flared as if under a blowpipe, and soon a fierce sheet of flame came bursting through the roof.

Down poured the rain; but the hottest of that blaze was roofed over, and the fire had its own way with the empty addition.

"We could n't help if we should try," exclaimed Mr. Ogden.

"I'll put on my old clothes, anyway," said Jack. "Nobody knows what's coming."

"I will, too," said his father.

Jack paused a moment, and said, from the foot of the stairs:

"The steeple's down,—right through the meeting-house. It has smashed the whole church!"

The sight of the fire had made him withhold that news for a minute; but now, for another minute, the fire was almost forgotten.

Elder Holloway began to say something in praise of Mary Ogden about her leading out the class, but she darted away.

"Let me get by, Jack," she said. "Let me pass, please. They all would have been killed if they had waited! But I was thinking only of my class and the rain."

She ran upstairs and Jack followed. Then the elder made a number of improving remarks about discipline and presence of mind, and the natural fitness of some people for doing the right thing in an emergency. He might have said more, but all were drawn to the windows to watch the strife between the fire and the rain.

The fierce wind drove the smoke through the building, compelling the landlord and his wife to escape as best they could, and, for the time being, the victory seemed to be with the fire.

"Seems to me," said the blacksmith somberly, "as if Crofield was going to pieces. This is the worst storm we ever had. The meeting-house is gone, and the hotel's going!"

Mary, at her window, was looking out in silence, but her face was bright rather than gloomy. Even if she was "only a girl," she

had found an opportunity for once, and she had not proved unequal to it.

CHAPTER V.

JACK needed only a few minutes to put on the suit he had worn when fishing.

"There, now!" he said; "if there's going to be a big flood in the creek I'm going down to see it, rain or no rain. There's no telling how high it'll rise if this pour keeps on long enough. It rattles on the roof like buck-shot!"

"That's the end of the old tavern," said Jack to Mary, as he stood in the front room looking out.

He was barefooted, and had come so silently that she was startled.

"Jack!" she exclaimed, turning around, "they might have all been killed when the steeple came down. I heard what Joe Hawkins said, and I led out the class."

"Good for Joe!" said Jack. "We need a new meeting-house, anyway. I heard the elder say so. Less steeple, next time, and more church!"

"I'd like to see a real big church," said Mary,— "a city church."

"You'd like to go to the city as much as I would," said Jack.

"Yes, I would," she replied emphatically. "Just you get there and I'll come afterward, if I can. I've been studying twice as hard since I left the academy, but I don't know why."

"I know it," said Jack; "but I've had no time for books."

"Jack! Molly!" the voice of Aunt Melinda came up the stairway. "Are you ever coming downstairs?"

"What will the elder say to my coming down barefoot?" said Jack; "but I don't want shoes if I'm going out into the mud."

"He won't care at such a time as this," said Mary. "Let's go."

It was not yet supper-time, but it was almost dark enough to light the lamps. Jack felt better satisfied about his appearance when he found how dark and shadowy the parlor was; and he felt still better when he saw his father dressed as if he were going over to work at the forge, all but the leather apron.

The elder did not seem disturbed. He and

Mr. Murdoch were talking about all sorts of great disasters, and Mary did not know just when she was drawn into the talk, or how she came to acknowledge having read about so many different things all over the world.

"Jack," whispered his mother, at last, "you'll have to go to the barn and gather eggs, or we shan't have enough for supper."

"I'll bring the eggs if I don't get drowned before I get back," said Jack; and he found a basket and an umbrella and set out.

He took advantage of a little lull in the rain, and ran to the barn-yard gate.

"Hullo!" he exclaimed. "Now I'll have to wade. Why it's nearly a foot deep! There'll be the biggest kind of a freshet in the Cocahutchie. Is n't this jolly!"

The rain pattered on the roof as if it had been the head of a drum. If the house was gloomy, the old barn was darker and gloomier. Jack turned over a half-bushel measure and sat down on it.

"I want to think," he said. "I want to get out of this. Seems to me I never felt it so before. I'd as lief live in this barn as stay in Crofield."

He suddenly sprang up and shook off his blues, exclaiming:

"I'll go and see the freshet, anyhow!"

He carried the eggs into the house.

All the time he had been gone, Elder Hollo-way had been asking Mary very particularly about the Crofield Academy.

"I don't wonder she says what she does about the trustees," remarked Aunt Melinda. "She took the primary room twice, for 'most a month each time, when the teacher was sick, and all the thanks she had was that they did n't like it when they found it out."

The gutter in front of the house had now become a small torrent.

"All the other gutters are just like that," said Jack. "So are the brooks all over the country, and it all runs into the Cocahutchie!"

"Father," said Jack, after supper, "I'm going down to the creek."

"I wish you would," said his father. "Come back and tell us how it's looking."

"Could a freshet here do any damage?" asked Mr. Murdoch.

"There's a big dam up at Four Corners," said

the blacksmith. "If anything should happen there, we'd have trouble here, and you'd have it in Mertonville, too."

Jack heard that as he was going out of the door. He carried an umbrella; but the first thing he noticed was that the force of the rain seemed to have slackened as soon as he was out of doors. It was now more like mist or a warm sleet, as if Crofield were drifting through a cloud.

"The Washington House needs all the rain it can get," said Jack, as he went along; "but half the roof is caved in. I'm glad Livermore's insured."

When Jack reached the creek he felt his heart fairly jump with excitement. The Cocahutchie was no longer a thin ribbon rippling along in a wide stretch of sand and gravel. It was a turbid, swollen, roaring flood, already filling all the space under its bridge; and the clump of old trees was in the water instead of on dry land.

"Hurrah!" shouted Jack. "As high as that already, and the worst is to come!"

He could not see the dam at first, but the gusts of wind were making openings in the mist, and he soon caught glimpses of a great sheet of foaming brown water.

"I'll go and take a look at the dam," he said; and he ran to the mill.

"It's just level with the dam," he said, after one swift glance. "I never thought of that. I must go and tell old Hammond what's coming."

The miller's house was not far away, and he and his family were at supper when there came a bang at the door. Then it opened and Mrs. Hammond exclaimed:

"Why, John Ogden!"

"I'm out o' breath," said Jack excitedly. "You tell him that the water's 'most up to the lower floor of the mill. If he's got anything there that'd be hurt by getting wet—"

"Goodness, yes!" shouted the miller, getting up from the table, "enough to ruin me. There are sacks of flour, meal, grain,—all sorts of stuff. It must all go up to the second floor. I'll call all the hands."

"But," said his wife, "it's Sunday!"

"Can't help it!" he exclaimed; "the Cocahutchie's coming right up into the mill. Jack, tell every man you see that I want him!"

Off went Jack homeward, but he spoke to half

a dozen men on the way. He did not run, but he went quickly enough; and when he reached the house there was something waiting for him.

It was a horse with a blanket strapped on instead of a saddle; and by it stood his father, and near him stood his mother and Aunt Melinda and Mary, bareheaded, for it was not raining, now.

"Mount, Jack," said the blacksmith quietly. "I've seen the creek. It's only four and a half miles to the Four Corners. Ride fast. See how that dam looks and come back and tell me. Mr. Murdoch will have his buggy ready to start when you get back. See how many logs there are in the saw-mill boom."

"Oh, Jack!" exclaimed Mary, in a low, suppressed voice. "I wish that I were you! It's a great day for you!"

He had sprung to the saddle while his father was speaking, and he felt it was out of his power to utter a word in reply. He did not need to speak to the horse, for the moment Mr. Ogden released the bit there was a quick bound forward.

"This horse is ready to go," said Jack to himself, as he felt that motion. "I've seen her before. I wonder what's made her so excited?"

There was no need for wonder. The trim, light-limbed sorrel mare he was riding had been kept in the hotel stables until that day. She had been taken out to a neighboring stable, at the morning alarm of fire, and when the blacksmith went to borrow her he found her laboring under a strong impression that things in Crofield were going wrong. She was therefore inclined to go fast, and all that Jack had to do was to hold her in. The blacksmith's son was at home in the saddle. It was not yet dark, and he knew the road to the Four Corners. It was a muddy road, and there was a little stream of water along each side of it. Spattered and splashed from head to foot were rider and horse, but the miles vanished rapidly and the Four Corners was reached.

A smaller village than Crofield, further up among the hills, it had a higher dam, a three times larger pond, a bigger grist-mill, and a large saw-mill. That was because there were forests of timber among the yet higher hills beyond, and Mr. Ogden had been thinking seriously about the logs from those forests.

"I know what Father means," said Jack aloud, as he galloped into the village.

There were hardly any people stirring about its one long street; but there was a reason for that and Jack found out what it was when he pulled up near the mill.

"Everybody has come to watch the dam," he exclaimed. "No use asking about the logs, though; there they are."

The crowd was evidently excited, and the air was filled with shouts and answers.

"The boom got unhitched and swung round 'cross the dam," said one eager speaker; "and there's all the logs, now,—hundreds on 'em,—just a-pilin' up and a-heapin' up on the dam; and when that breaks, the dam 'll go, mill and all, bridge and all, and the valley below 'll be flooded!"

The moon was up, and the clouds which had hidden it were breaking away as Jack looked at the threatening spectacle before him.

The sorrel mare was tugging hard at the rein and pawing the mud under her feet, while Jack listened to the talk.

"Stand it? No!" he heard a man say. "That dam was n't built to stand any such crowdin' as that. Hark!"

A groaning, straining, cracking sound came from the barrier behind which the foaming flood was widening and deepening the pond.

"There it goes! It's breaking!"

Jack wheeled the sorrel, as a dull, thunderous report was answered by a great cry from the crowd; and then he dashed away down the homeward road.

"I must get to Crofield before the water does," he said. "Glad the creek's so crooked; it has twice as far to travel as I have."

Not quite, considering how a flood will sweep over a bend instead of following it. Still, Jack and the sorrel had the start, and nearly all the way it was a downhill road.

The Crofield people gathered fast, after the sky cleared, for a rumor went around that there was something wrong with the dam, and that a man had gone to the Four Corners to warn the people there.

All the men that could crowd into the mill had helped Mr. Hammond get his grain up into the second story, but the water was a hand-breadth deep on the lower floor by the time it was done.

There came a moment when all was silent except the roar of the water, and through that silence the thud of hoofs was heard coming down from Main street. Then a shrill, excited voice shouted:

"All of you get off that bridge! The Four Corners dam's gone. The boom's broken, and the logs are coming!"

There was a tumult of questioning, as men

was very muddy but none the worse for the service she had rendered.

The crowd stood waiting for what was sure to come. Miller Hammond was anxiously watching his threatened and already damaged property. Jack came and stood beside him.

"Mr. Hammond," he said, "all the gravel that you were going to sell to Father is lying under water."



"RUN, MOLLY! RUN FOR HOME!" SHOUTED JACK. "IT'S GOING TO BE AN AWFUL STORM." (SEE PAGE 437.)

gathered around the sorrel, and there was a swift clearing of people from the bridge.

"Why, it's shaking now!" said the blacksmith to Mr. Murdoch. "It'll go down with the first log that strikes it. You drive your best home to Mertonville and warn them. You may be just in time."

Away went the editor, carrying with him an extraordinary treasure of news for the next number of his journal. Jack dismounted, and her owner took the sorrel to her stable; she

"More than two acres of it," said the miller. "The water'll run off, though. I'll tell you what I'll do, Jack. I'll sell it for two hundred dollars, considering the flood."

"If Father'll take it, will you count in the fifty you said you owed me?" inquired Jack.

The miller made a wry face for a moment, but then responded, smiling:

"Well! After what you've done to-night, too: saved all there was on the first floor,—yes, I will. Tell him I'll do it."

They all turned suddenly toward the dam. A high ridge of water was sweeping down across the pond. It carried a crest of foam, logs, planks, and rubbish, shining white in the moonlight, and it rolled on toward the mill and the dam as if it had an errand.

Crash — roar — crash — and a plunging sound,—and it seemed as if the Crofield dam had vanished. But it had not. Only a section of its top work, in the middle, had been knocked away by the rushing stroke of those logs.

A frightened shout went up from the spectators, and it had hardly died away before there followed another splintering crash.

"The bridge!" shouted Jack.

The frail supports of the bridge, brittle with age and weather, already straining hard against the furious water, needed only the battering of the first heavy logs from the boom, and down they went.

"Gone!" exclaimed Mr. Ogden. "The hotel's gone, and the meeting-house, and the dam, and the bridge. There won't be anything left of Crofield, at this rate."

"I'm going to get out of it," said Jack.

"I'll never refuse you again," replied his father, with energy. "You may get out any way you can, and take your chances anywhere you please. I won't stand in your way."

The roar of the surging Cocahutchie was the only sound heard for a full minute, and then the miller spoke.

"The mill's safe," he said, with a very long breath of relief; "the breaking of that hole in the dam let the water and logs through, and the pond is n't rising. Hurrah!"

There was a very faint and scattering cheer, and Jack Ogden did not join in it. He had turned suddenly and walked away homeward, along the narrow strip of land that remained between the wide, swollen Cocahutchie and the fence.

At the end of the fence, where he came into his own street, away above where the head of the bridge had been, there was a large gathering. That around the mill had been nearly all of men and boys. Here were women and girls, and the smaller boys, whose mothers and aunts held them and kept them from going nearer the water. Jack found it of no use

to say, "Oh, mother, I'm too muddy!" She did n't care how muddy he was, and Aunt Melinda cared even less, apparently. Bessie and Sue had evidently been crying; but Mary had not; and it was her hand on Jack's arm that led him away, up the street, toward their gate.

"Oh, Jack!" she exclaimed, "I'm so proud! Did you ride fast? I'm glad I can ride! I could have done it, too. It was splendid!"

"Molly," said Jack, "I don't mind telling you. The sorrel mare galloped all the way, going and coming, up hill and down; and Molly, I kept wishing and thinking every jump she gave,—wishing I was galloping to New York, instead of to the Four Corners!"

"Molly," he added quickly, "Father gives it up and says I may go!"

CHAPTER VI.

MONDAY morning came, bright and sunshiny; and it hardly reached Crofield before the people began to get up and look about them.

Jack went down to the river and did not come back very soon. His mind was full of something besides the flood, and he did not linger long at the mill.

But he looked long and hard at all the pieces of land below the mill, down to Deacon Hawkins's line. He knew where that was, although the fence was gone.

"The freshet did n't wash away a foot of it," he said. "I'll tell Father what Mr. Hammond said about selling it."

A pair of well-dressed men drove down from Main street in a buggy and halted near him.

"Brady," said one of these men, "the engineer is right. We can't change the railroad line. We can say to the Crofield people that if they'll give us the right of way through the village we'll build them a new bridge. They'll do it. Right here's the spot for the station."

"Exactly," said the other man, "and the less we say about it the better. Keep mum."

"That's just what I'll do, too," said Jack to himself, as they drove away. "I don't know what they mean, but it'll come out some day."

Jack went home at once, and found the family

at breakfast. After breakfast his father went to the shop, and Jack followed him to speak about the land purchase.

When Jack explained the miller's offer, Mr. Ogden went with him to see Mr. Hammond. After a short interview, Mr. Ogden and Jack secured the land in settlement of the amount

"Station?—right of way?" exclaimed Mr. Ogden. "That 's the new railroad through Mertonville. They 'll use up that land, and we won't get a cent. Well, it did n't cost anything. I 'd about given up collecting that bill."

Later that day, Jack came in to dinner with a smile on his face. It was the old smile, too;



"THE SORREL MARE WAS TUGGING HARD AT THE REIN AND PAWING THE MUD UNDER HER FEET." (SEE PAGE 440.)

already promised Jack, and of an old debt owed by the miller to the blacksmith, and also in consideration of their consenting to a previous sale of the trees for cash to the Bannermans, who had made their offer that morning. Mr. Hammond seemed very glad to make the sale upon these terms, as he was in need of ready money.

When Jack returned to his father's shop, he remembered the men he had seen at the river, and he told his father what they had said.

a smile of good-humored self-confidence, which flickered over his lips from side to side, and twisted them, and shut his mouth tight. Just as he was about to speak, his father took a long, neatly folded paper out of his coat pocket and laid it on the table.

"Look at that, Jack," he said; "and show it to your mother."

"Warranty deed!" exclaimed Jack, reading the print on the outside. "Father! you did n't

turn it over to me, did you? Mother, it's to John Ogden, Jr.!"

"Oh, John—" she began, and stopped.

"Why, my dear," laughed the blacksmith, cheerfully, "it's his gravel, not mine. I'll hold it for him, for a while, but it is Jack's whenever I choose to record that deed."

"I'm afraid I could n't farm it there," said Jack; and then the smile on his face flickered fast. "But I knew Father wanted that land."

"It is n't worth much, but it's a beginning," said Mary. "I'd like to own something or other, or to go somewhere."

"Well, Molly," answered Jack, smiling, "you can go to Mertonville. Livermore says there's a team here, horses and open carriage. It came over on Friday. The driver has cleared out, and somebody must take them home, and he wants me to drive over. Can't I take Molly, Mother?"

"You'd have to walk back," said his father, "but that's nothing much. It's less than nine miles—"

"Father," said Jack, "you said, last night, I need n't come back to Crofield, right away. And Mertonville's nine miles nearer the city—"

"And a good many times nine miles yet to go," exclaimed the blacksmith; but then he added, smiling, "Go ahead, Jack. I do believe that if any boy can get there, you can."

"I'll do it somehow," said Jack, with a determined nod.

"Of course you will," said Mary.

Jack felt as if circumstances were changing pretty fast, so far as he was concerned; and so did Mary, for she had about given up all hope of seeing her friends in Mertonville.

"We'll get you ready, right away," said Aunt Melinda. "You can give Jack your traveling-bag,—he won't mind the key's being lost,—and I'll let you take my trunk, and we'll fit you out so you can enjoy it."

"Jack," said his father, "tell Livermore you can go, and then I want to see you at the shop."

Jack was so glad he could hardly speak; for he felt it was the first step. But a part of his feeling was that he had never before loved Crofield and all the people in it, especially his own family, so much as at that minute.

He went over to the ruined hotel, where he

found the landlord at work saving all sorts of things and seeming to feel reasonably cheerful over his misfortunes.

"Jack," he said, as soon as he was told that Jack was ready to go, "you and Molly will have company. Miss Glidden sent to know how she could best get over to Mertonville, and I said she could go with you. There's a visitor, too, who must go back with her."

"I'll take 'em," said Jack.

Upon going to the shop he found his father shoeing a horse. The blacksmith beckoned his son to the further end of the shop. He heard about Miss Glidden, and listened in silence to several hopeful things Jack had to say about what he meant to do sooner or later.

"Well," he said, at last, "I was right not to let you go before, and I've doubts about it now, but something must be done. I'm making less and less, and not much of it's cash, and it costs more to live, and they're all growing up. I don't want you to make me any promises. They are broken too easily. You need n't form good resolutions. They won't hold water. There's one thing I want you to do, though. Your mother and I have brought you up as straight as a string, and you know what's right and what's wrong."

"That's true," said Jack.

"Well, then, don't you promise nor form any resolutions, but if you're tempted to do wrong, or to be a fool in any kind of way, just don't do it, that's all."

"I won't, Father," said Jack earnestly.

"There," said his father, "I feel better satisfied than I should feel if you'd promised a hundred things. It's a great deal better not to do anything that you know to be wrong or foolish."

"I think so," said Jack, "and I won't."

"Go home now and get ready," said his father; "and I'll see you off."

"This is very sudden, Jack," said his mother, with much feeling, when he made his appearance.

"Why, Mother," said Jack, "Molly'll be back soon, and the city is n't so far away after all."

Jack felt as if he had only about enough head left to change his clothes and drive the team.

"It's just as Mother says," he thought; "I've

been wishing and hoping for it, but it 's come very suddenly."

His black traveling-bag was quickly ready. He had closed it and was walking to the door when his mother came in.

"Jack," she said, "you 'll send me a postal card every day or two?"

"Of course I will," said he bravely.

"And I know you 'll be back in a few weeks, at most," she went on; "but I feel as sad as if you were really going away from home. Why, you 're almost a child! You can't really be going away!"

That was where the talk stopped for a while, except some last words that Jack could never forget. Then she dried her eyes and he dried his, and they went downstairs together. It was hard to say good-bye to all the family, and he was glad his father was not there. He got away from them as soon as he could, and went over to the stables after his team. It was a bay team, with a fine harness, and the open carriage was almost new.

"Stylish!" said Jack. "I 'll take Molly on the front seat with me,—no, the trunk,—and Miss Glidden's trunk,—well, I 'll get 'em all in somehow!"

When he drove up in front of the house his father was there to put the baggage in and to help Mary into the carriage and to shake hands with Jack.

The blacksmith's grimy face looked less gloomy for a moment.

"Jack," he said, "good-bye. Maybe you 'll really get to the city after all."

"I think I shall," said Jack, with an effort to speak calmly.

"Well," said the blacksmith, slowly, "I hope

you will, somehow; but don't you forget that there 's another city."

Jack knew what he meant. They shook hands, and in another moment the bays were trotting briskly on their way to Miss Glidden's. Her house was one of the finest in Crofield, with



"HE LISTENED IN SILENCE TO SEVERAL HOPEFUL THINGS JACK HAD TO SAY." (SEE PAGE 444.)

lawn and shrubbery. Mary Ogden had never been inside of it, but she had heard that it was beautifully furnished. There were Miss Glidden and her friend on the piazza, and out at the sidewalk, by the gate, was a pile of baggage, at the sight of which Jack exclaimed:

"Trunks! They 're young houses! How 'll I get 'em all in? I can strap and rope one on the back of the carriage, but then—!"

Miss Glidden frowned at first, when the carriage pulled up, but she came out to the gate, smiling, and so did the other lady.

"Why, Mary Ogden, my dear," she said, "Mrs. Potter and I did not know you were going with us. It's quite a surprise."

"So it is to Jack and me," replied Mary quietly. "We were very glad to have you come, though, if we can find room for your trunks."

"I can manage 'em," said Jack. "Miss Glidden, you and Mrs. Potter get in, and Pat and I'll pack the trunks on somehow."

Pat was the man who had brought out the luggage, and he was waiting to help. He was needed. It was a very full carriage when he and Jack finished their work. There was room made for the passengers by putting Mary's small trunk down in front, so that Jack's feet sprawled over it from the nook where he sat.

"I can manage the team," Jack said to himself. "They won't run away with this load."

Mary sat behind him, the other two on the back seat, and all the rest of the carriage was trunks; not to speak of what Jack called a "young house," moored behind.

It all helped Jack to recover his usual composure, nevertheless, and he drove out of Crofield, on the Mertonville road, confidently.

"We shall discern traces of the devastation occasioned by the recent inundation, as we progress," remarked Mrs. Potter.

Jack replied: "Oh, no! The creek takes a great swoop, below Crofield, and the road's a short cut. There'll be some mud, though."

He was right and wrong. There was mud that forced the heavily laden carriage to travel slowly, here and there, but there was nothing seen of the Cocahutchie for several miles.

"Hullo!" exclaimed Jack suddenly. "It looks like a kind of lake. It does n't come up over the road, though. I wonder what dam has given out now!"

There was the road, safe enough, but all the country to the right of it seemed to have been

turned into water. On rolled the carriage, the horses now and then showing signs of fear and distrust, and the two older passengers expressing ten times as much.

"Now, Molly," said Jack, at last, "there's a bridge across the creek, a little ahead of this. I'd forgotten about that. Hope it's there yet."

"Oh, dear me!" exclaimed Miss Glidden.

"Don't prognosticate disaster," said Mrs. Potter earnestly; and it occurred to Jack that he had heard more long words during that drive than any one boy could hope to remember.

"Hurrah!" he shouted, a few minutes later. "Link's bridge is there! There's water on both sides of the road, though."

It was an old bridge, like that at Crofield, and it was narrow, and it trembled and shook while the snorting bays pranced and shied their frightened way across it. They went down the slope on the other side with a dash that would have been a bolt, if Jack had not been ready for them. Jack was holding them with a hard pull upon the reins, but he was also looking up the Cocahutchie.

"I see what's the matter," he said. "The logs got stuck in a narrow place, and made a dam of their own, and set the water back over the flat. The feshet has n't reached Mertonville yet. Jingo!"

Bang, crack, crash!—came a sharp sound behind him.

"The bridge is down!" he shouted. "We were only just in time. Some of the logs have been carried down, and one of them knocked it endways."

That was precisely the truth of the matter; and away went the bays, as if they meant to race with the feshet to see which would first arrive in Mertonville.

"I'm on my way to the city, anyhow," thought Jack, with deep satisfaction.

(To be continued.)

WINTER COSTUMES.

BY ROSE MUELLER SPRAGUE.

The sketch, on page 447, of three costumes for winter wear, shows one for a young girl of sixteen years of age, one for a girl of twelve, and one for a child of three.

We suggest for them a scheme of color which may be of assistance to those who may care to utilize these hints for picturesque costuming.

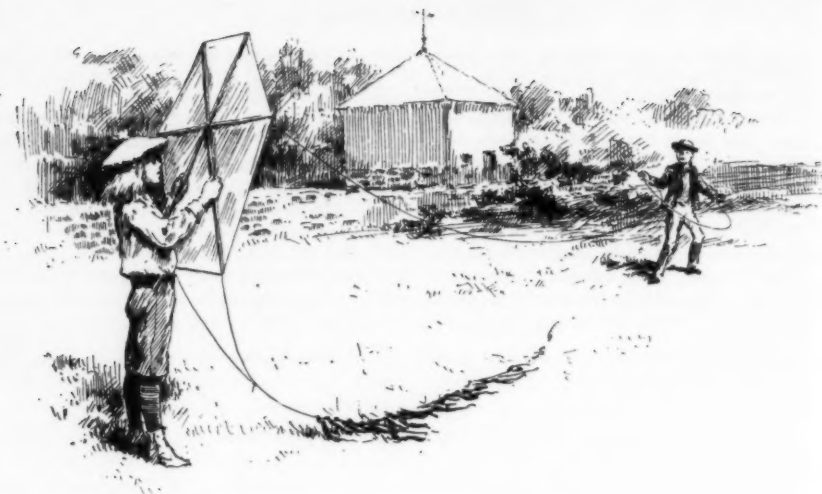
For the girl of sixteen, it is suggested that "mode brown" serge might be used for jacket and gown. The jacket might be trimmed with narrow silk braid of the same color as the cloth. The buttons can be of light tan-colored horn. The crown of the hat is of felt, of a color to match the costume, and the brim is to be faced with dark brown (the color called "tobacco") velvet. The feather trimming is a light tuft of brown feathers.

For the girl of twelve, "copper red" cloth might be used for the long garment, which completely conceals the gown underneath. The lapels, collar, and the sleeves should be made of velvet, of the same shade as the cloth. Let the buttons be "tailor-made," and covered with the

same cloth as that used for the garment. At the back is a "jaunty" *capote* of copper velvet, trimmed with black ostrich pompons and with an *aigrette*.

The costume for the little child might be made from light "coach cloth." The capes and collars may be prettily lined with surah of the same color as the coat. One of the capes should be trimmed (as indicated in the sketch) with plain-edge gros-grain ribbon, half an inch wide. The buttons for this dress can be covered with gros-grain silk of the same shade as the ribbon. The little *capote* of light "coach" velvet should be trimmed with a knot of ribbon at the point of the cape and should have ribbons to tie in a bow under the chin.





"THEREBY HANGS A TAIL."

BY HARPER PENNINGTON.

MUCH has been written, early and late, concerning kites and how to make them; but no one seems to have paid proper attention to one very important part of this great subject—that is, the making of the kite's *tail*. Now, the tail of a kite does for the kite precisely what ballast does for a ship. No vessel will sail well and steadily unless her ballast is properly adjusted; and the same principle applies to kites.

A bad kite with a good tail will fly better than a good kite with a bad tail.

I will explain the way in which a tail should be made.

Generally speaking, the tail should be four times the length of the kite.

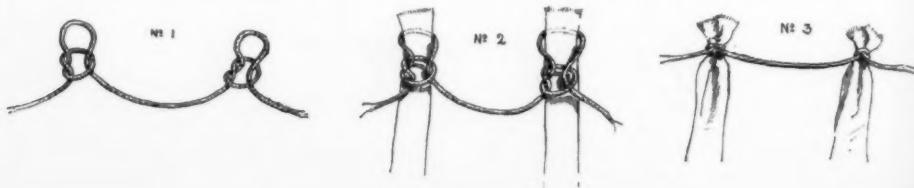
Tie one end of a ball of twine to some object that is firm (I always use a door-knob), and proceed to make an ordinary slip-knot (No. 1), three or four feet from where the

twine is fastened. Two knots are shown in the diagram.

Into this slip-knot insert one end of a strip of flannel, cloth, or calico, half an inch in width and half the length of the kite (No. 2), and pull the knot tight (No. 3). Then make another loop two and a half inches from the first, and proceed as in the first case, continuing in like manner until you have a sufficient quantity. The next thing is to trim the strips, graduating them like those in the illustration (No. 4).

My own plan is to use one yard of blue and one yard of red flannel, and one yard of common muslin. Three yards will be more than enough material for the tail of a kite six feet long. Tearing each into strips half an inch wide, I arrange them as already explained and shown in No. 4.

The result is a very handsome kite-tail.





I do not propose to say very much about the making of kites themselves, because that subject has been exhaustively treated by others.* There is one specimen, however, worthy of mention, which has not been put on record, I believe. You will see a sketch of it in cut No. 5.

The sticks are prolonged beyond the actual size of the covering; from their tips is stretched a string around the kite's edge on which are

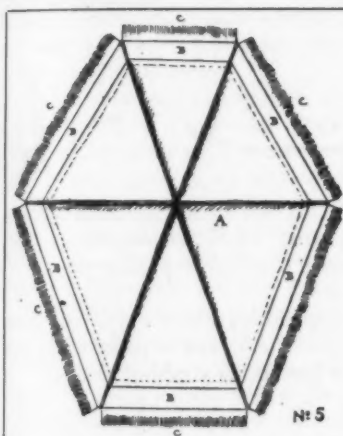
In diagrams 7 and 8 you see the correct proportion of the tail and belly-band of a kite.

The strings (AA) which sustain the kite's tail are fastened to the sticks at their lower ends, and when drawn taut, their center should be just long enough to reach the crossing of the sticks. To these strings the tail is tied firmly at the center, and care should be taken that the knot comes exactly in the middle.

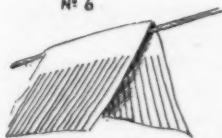
The "belly-band" (BB,C) is also drawn in correct proportion. Tie E and BB at D, leaving a few feet of twine from E beyond the knot, so that you will have something on which to fasten your flying-string.

The picture No. 9, and also the head-piece, show the proper way to "raise" a kite.

Have a young friend to hold it, facing the wind, and be careful to place the tail straight out in front; make sure that the tail is not tangled, nor in danger of catching upon anything. Then — give the word, run back a few paces, and your kite will sail steadily and gracefully from the earth, as shown in the



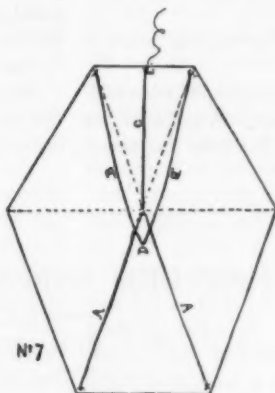
No. 6



pasted strips of fringed tissue paper, doubled across it (No. 6).

If the colors of the kite cover and of the fringe are tastefully chosen, this makes a very handsome, though somewhat heavy, kite.

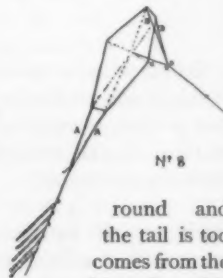
Uniform colors are generally better in effect than are bits of red, green, blue, and yellow; because with paper of one color the "lines" of your kite are plainly visible. Fancy a yacht painted in red, white, and blue sections! What would we see of her symmetry?



No. 7

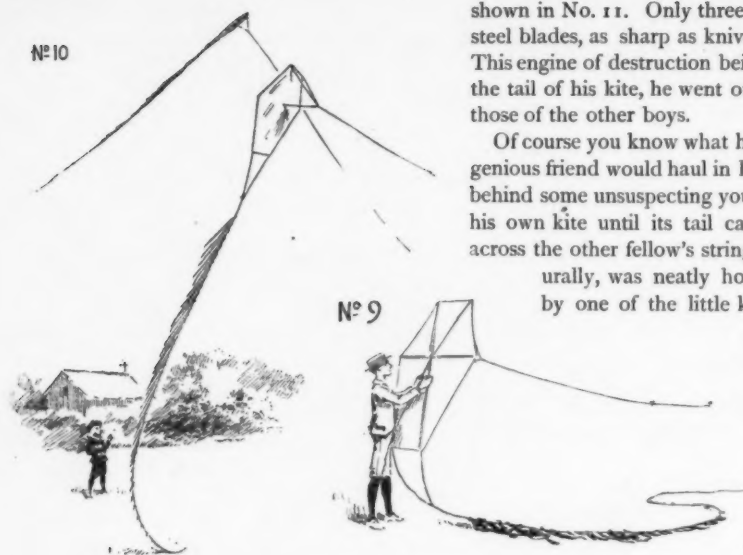
cut, and soon take the position of the one at the top of the drawing (No. 10).

When a kite twirls round, it is because light. "Darting" same cause, as a rule; may come from a badly balanced tail, or an ill-adjusted belly-band. "Wobbling" is caused by putting the cross-stick too high, usually, or by



No. 8

round and the tail is too comes from the although this



shown in No. 11. Only three tiny, hook-shaped, steel blades, as sharp as knives, set in a swivel. This engine of destruction being tied securely to the tail of his kite, he went out to fly it amongst those of the other boys.

Of course you know what happened! My ingenious friend would haul in his line, and getting behind some unsuspecting youth, would "drop" his own kite until its tail caught and dragged across the other fellow's string, which, very naturally, was neatly hooked and severed by one of the little knives.

To be sure he *did* get a sound thrashing for it

making the belly-band at BB too long for the string C.

Kite-flying can be made an exciting game, as well as a pleasant pastime.

A certain ingenious companion of my childhood saved his pocket-money, and had made for him by an obliging cutler, the little instrument

in the end; but out of his invention grew a game of "pirates," which did more to teach us how to manage kites than any other thing.

Just try it!

But, for good sport's sake, do give your kites the proper sort of tails; and let paper-wads, and other similar horrors, be abolished forever.

MOTHER NATURE'S BABES IN THE WOOD.

By E. M. HARDING.

ON the trees, the bushes, and under the ground at this season are flowers and leaves asleep, and almost ready to awaken. Dame Nature is nurse to them all, and while they slept she has kept them dry and warm.

If you pick a short branch from a tree or shrub, you will see upon it, at regular distances apart, little knobs or humps. These are the buds of leaves and blossoms which will soon awaken, and unfold, and fill the earth with perfume and beauty.

If Jack Frost had got at them, or if the cold

raints had beaten on them, they would have been blighted. So the buds have been carefully protected all winter from the cold, the damp, and the fierce winds.

Each bud is wrapped up in a number of little stiff scales. Often these scales are coated with a sort of varnish which keeps out the wet.

The buds of the horse-chestnut are "pitched without with pitch," like the floating cradle of the infant Moses. They are quite sticky to the touch, and shed water like a rubber coat.

Indeed, we may say that the baby horse-chest-

nut leaves wear fur-lined waterproof coats, for the scales which are so sticky on the outside are thickly lined with soft white down.

Many other buds are protected from wet and cold in the same manner.

The tiny locust and sumach leaves are guarded during their winter sleep in yet another way. They are hid so cleverly that Jack Frost can not find them, and it would puzzle us, also, to find them unless we knew just where to look.

Those of the sumach are sunk in the thick bark until they begin to grow, and those of the honey-locust are buried deep in those humps from which the thorns appear to spring. Crocuses, anemones, daffodils, and all the other spring flowers which grow straight up out of the ground have been protected under a covering of soil and dead leaves.

Some leaves and blossoms are already awakening from their winter sleep. The rest will finish their slumbers soon, and once awake they will begin to grow in a most surprising way.

We have all read, in "The Arabian Nights," how a gigantic genie came out of a small pickle-jar. If we look about us this spring we will see this wonder outdone by any hedgerow.

These lilac buds are no larger than the tip of a woman's little finger; yet some of them contain a spray with several leaves, and from others there will come a great spire of flowers.

The sticky horse-chestnut buds will open to let out into the sun four or five great spreading leaves surrounding a pyramid of blossoms.

How snugly they are folded away in these little brown buds! No shopman could wrap parcels half so cleverly as Mother Nature does. No French maid ever packed her mistress's finery with half the skill which Nature has shown in the folding of baby blossom or tender leaf.

Girls know that dresses which have been lying for a long time folded away in a drawer or trunk are creased when they are taken out.

So are the leaves, when they come out of the buds where they have been tightly folded for so many months. After a while the breezes will shake out all these little wrinkles, but when the foliage is new and fresh we can see them plainly.

Some leaves have been rolled like music in

a portable case, or like a window-shade around its roller. Some have been folded like fans, and some have been doubled lengthwise down the middle as a school-girl folds her composition. May-apple leaves come up looking like closed umbrellas, and then open just as umbrellas do. The crinkled spring foliage is very pretty and interesting, too; for the creases show how Mother Nature contrived to get so many leaves into so small a parcel.

And where is the food which has been prepared for these awakening buds? Growing leaves and flowers, like growing children, need plenty of nourishment, and Dame Nature has provided whole storehouses full of food just such as young foliage and baby blossoms need.

The crocus and the daffodil get their food from little storehouses underground.

If we dig up a root early in spring, before the flowers have opened, we shall find it white, firm, round, and fat. The flower-stem is able to shoot up so fast because it is nourished by this abundant good fare, just as a boy who is outgrowing all his clothes is doing it by means of unnumbered breakfasts, dinners, and suppers. The blossom owes much of its beauty to this stored food; and if the supply were to give out, the colors of the flower would grow dim.

By the time the blossom dies the little storehouse will be emptied, but then the crocus will have formed long leaves and active roots, and will be able to gather enough nourishment from the soil and the air to satisfy all its wants.

The lilac leaves grow so fast because they are well fed on food which has been saved on purpose for them all winter long. It has been stored away just under the bark, so that the lilac's storehouse is in its branches.

All the boughs which are now beginning to put forth leaves and flowers are full of gum and sap. These juices have been "saved up" all winter in the wood and bark, and now they feed the swelling buds, the unfolding leaves, and the opening flowers.

There is plenty for all, and each is getting just the sort of food it needs, for Nature, like a wise and loving mother, guards the slumbers and provides for the wants of all her children.

THE LETTER-BOX.

TŌKIJŌ, JAPAN, Nov. 5, '89.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I am a Japanese boy of fifteen years old. I have been your loving reader for the last two years, and I am much indebted to you for your many, many amusing stories, interesting fables, beautiful pictures, etc. I have never written to you before, being ashamed of my broken English; but this time I was encouraged to take up my pen in order to write to you for the first time, by a fact that his highness, Prince Haru, son of His Majesty, our present Emperor, was proclaimed to be the Crown Prince the day before yesterday, which is the birthday of our Emperor, and consequently the greatest holiday in our country. So, my dear ST. NICHOLAS, do not laugh at my broken English.

How rejoiced we were on that day. We, of course, school-boys, went to the Palace's gate, and there, when the Prince came out, we cheered him thrice: "Long live Prince!" Cannons were fired, streets were decorated, national flags were hung out at every house, and people, young and old, were alike mad with rejoicing.

Ah! Long live our Emperor and Prince! Long live our President! Japan and America! Blessed lands!

The July number of ST. NICHOLAS contains an article of Prince Haru; but it is full of stories based upon, I say, nothing. Such as His Highness's wrestling with an American boy is quite absurd. Besides, His Highness's portrait is somewhat ugly, and I am very much angry with it.

I send to you three copies of a Japanese magazine called "Shōnen-yen" (literally The Young Peoples' Garden), which has a circulation of about twenty thousand copies every number. In one of it you shall find a fine portrait of His Highness, Prince Haru. It was taken after a photograph. The four red-colored pages in the same number contains an article of His Highness's character and daily pursuits, which, if you want, I will gladly translate into English and send to you. Yours is no doubt taken from a vulgar painting drawn by an inferior artist, and sold in Japanese street toy-shops.

The other two copies contain some Japanese stories in English, and so I send them to you, hoping that they will amuse you.

In February number, you have published a portrait of our sacred Emperor, but, like that of the Prince, it is quite absurd.

I have written too long a letter, so I shall stop here; next time I will write more about our beloved Emperor and Prince and the Japanese children. Hoping to take your magazine for many years yet to come, I remain your antipode and admiring reader,

FUMIO YAMAGATA.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Dec. 28, 1889.

DEAR FUMIO YAMAGATA SAN: I agree with you that the engraved portrait of His Highness Prince Haru did not do him justice, but it follows as closely as American engravers could make it do the large photograph of the prince taken by K. Ogawa, of Tokio.

The foreign boy with whom Prince Haru had the little adventure which I mentioned is the son of the late Mr. Frederick Strange, of Tokio, and if you will find him, he can assure you that such a thing really happened.

I greatly admire your patriotic defense of your prince, and your charming letter, which could not be better written or more clearly expressed by any fifteen-year-old American boy whom I know.

Very truly, ELIZA RUHAMAH SCIDMORE.

(Author of the article "Yoshi Hito, Haru No Miya, the Child of Modern Japan," in ST. NICHOLAS for July, 1889).

The story entitled "Fifteen Minutes With a Cyclone," in this number of ST. NICHOLAS, is so remarkable that a letter of inquiry concerning the facts was forwarded to the author, who sent in reply the letter which follows:

WEST MEDFORD, MASS.

EDITOR ST. NICHOLAS: In regard to the story "Fifteen Minutes with a Cyclone," I assure you that the account is true in all the essential points, as I have written it. The facts were given me by the gentleman's brother, who visited the scene a few days later. The family now reside in Malden, Mass., and I can give you names if you so desire. I think it not at all strange that you should doubt the authenticity of the account, for it was a most remarkable experience, the family escaping unhurt, and even the cattle found standing in their usual places; while the miraculous escape of the gentleman himself, who descended head first into the well, is unparalleled. It is one of the instances where truth is stranger than fiction.

Respectfully,

M. LOUISE FORD.

WILLIAMSPORT, PA.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I have been taking you for four years, and have never written you a letter.

I am nine years old, and both my little sister and I enjoy your magazine very much.

We had a very unpleasant time June 1st, at the time of the flood, when the water rose and came in the house. But I thought I would make the best of it, so I took a piece of board-walk for a raft and sailed around in the yard and on the street.

After the water came up in the house, we stood on the stair steps and fished.

My Grandma sends you to me for a Christmas present.

Yours truly, JAMES B—.

FLUSHING, L. I.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I thought the "Sir Rat" was very nice. I hope you'll give another just as nice as that, so we can act it. We acted "Sir Rat" on Thanksgiving at Grandmama's.

I am a little girl six years old. My sister is twelve, and my brother, the little one, is four, and my big brother is eight.

My little bit of a brother acted Tommy's part, and my sister acted the father and mother, and my big brother acted Sir Rat.

Good-bye, I am, your little girl,
HENRIETTA L. S—.

LIMA, PERU, Oct. 22d, 1889.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I live in Lima, the capital of Peru, where, strange as it will seem to some of your young readers, snow never falls, and it never rains, except slight dews on wintry mornings, if they can be called rain. Flowers—the most beautiful ones—bloom also throughout the whole year, and delicious fruits grow.

The city is situated at a very small distance from the Pacific Ocean and very near the Andes, this being the cause of frequent and sometimes terrible earthquakes; we are now in the season of earthquakes, for they generally come during the months of September and October, although this year we had a severe one on the 28th of July, precisely the day of Peru's anniversary, and this month we have not had any until now.

I agree with all your readers in saying that "Little Lord Fauntleroy" is the prettiest story that ever was written.

I saw Elsie Leslie Lyde's photograph in the April number, and I think it is charming. Every month I look forward to your coming with great pleasure.

Your constant little reader,

ANITA R. B.—

CINCINNATI, O.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I have an interesting story to tell about some turtles we caught.

Summer before last, when my brother and I were visiting our grandfather in Waltham, Mass., we rowed up the Charles River, which flows through that place, and, after some time, caught a turtle a little larger than a silver dollar. This we named Juan. He was beautifully colored with yellow, red, and black, and on getting home we placed him in a tin pan full of water on a window sill, after putting a few bits of meat and cracker in the water.

The next day we went to see how Juan was, and to our astonishment he was gone. We hunted everywhere, but could not find him. We again went up river, and, in the very same place, found a turtle the same size, which we named Juanita.

We took her home, and, putting her in the same place that Juan was put, left her for the night. The next morning she was gone, also, and after hunting a long time I found them both huddled together in a corner of the dining-room behind an ottoman. We put them in a much deeper pan, and they did not run away again. When we left Grandpa's we took the turtles to the river, and they each swam off in a different direction.

This last summer we again went to Waltham, and caught five little turtles. Two of them, considerably larger than the others, were named Juan and Don Jose. Two, a little smaller than these, were Juanita and Senora, and one, the smallest I ever saw, was Amigo.

We were so attached to these that when we went to our other Grandpa's we took them in a tin pail with holes in the cover. The people in the train around us seemed very anxious to see what we had, and, when we let them take a peep, they admired them very much.

We wanted to take them to Cincinnati with us, but were afraid they would be homesick away from their native river.

I have taken you for three years now, and like you very much.

I remain, your interested reader,

MABEL W.—

MY DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: We take you regularly, and read all the stories, the letters, and the riddles, but some of the last are very hard.

As we have some very dear friends at Seattle, near Tacoma, we were very much interested in the "Old Boy's" letter from there.

I spent the summer at a very pretty little place on Nantucket Island, Siasconset, or S'conset, as the natives call it; perhaps some of your other readers have been there, for I met you several times. Among the other people who took you, there was a tiny little girl from quite far out West, and both she and her little sister read you constantly, though the little one could hardly read at all.

We all enjoy your December number so much with the "Boyhood of Thackeray," for we all love "The Rose and the Ring," and are glad to know something more about the author.

I remain, your loving reader,

E. L. D.—

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: Perhaps your readers would like to hear about some of our Belgian customs.

St. Nicholas Day, Dec. 6th, is a grand day for children. Every one of them firmly believes that Santa Claus rides, with his toy-laden donkey, on the roof of every house, and comes down the chimneys to lay presents in the rooms. I used to put some hay by my empty shoe in case the donkey might be hungry. We have Christmas-trees, of course, with toys and oranges and gilded nuts, but most of the real presents are given on New Year's Day; there are "réveillons" on New Year's Eve, that is, supper parties, where people are very merry and drink toasts to the dawning year until 1 or 2 o'clock. Much later in the morning come in all the presents; flowers, chocolate, fondants, marrons glacés. I believe our sweets are much prized in other countries.

A few days after that, on Jan. 6th, we have La Fête des Rois Mages; there is high fun at the dinner parties that are given in many houses. At dessert, a great cake, with one bean baked in it, is divided equally among the guests (except one bit, kept for the first beggar who comes). Whoever finds the bean in his or her bit is crowned King or Queen of The Bean, chooses a partner and attendants, and is made much of the whole evening.

Easter Day is welcome to all children, for "Les Cloches de Pâques," or Easter bells, bring them plenty of presents, usually in the shape of well-filled sugar eggs, or huge chocolate eggs. For a week before Easter, the bells in churches do not ring, and the children are told they have gone away to fetch toys and things. Even the poorest people try to have some gay-colored eggs. Among the presents given to them are often those wooden shoes, or sabots, that foreigners admire so much, and that make such splendid boats.

You see Belgian children often get presents, besides upon birthdays; they are very well off in that respect.

I remain, your faithful reader,

GRANNY.

CHARLESTON, S. C.

MY DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I have taken you for several years, but have never written to you before, and I hope you will print this, as it is for a surprise to my darling brother Leo, who is 'way down in California. I am lame and can not walk much, and, dear ST. NICHOLAS, you don't know how much you help me pass away the long days.

I have a little brother named Halbert. He has a language of his own, and nobody can understand him but myself. He has big brown eyes and curly golden hair, and is just three years old. I am twelve, and Leo is twenty-two. I must close now, with much love.

Your little reader,

ETTA DE W.—

DETROIT, MICH.

MY DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I am a little girl ten years old, and have taken you for only one year, and like you so much I could not get along without you. Since I have

taken you, I have never seen a letter from Detroit, so thought I would write, hoping that this may interest some of your readers. Mamma has a friend who draws for the St. NICHOLAS, her name is Rose Mueller Sprague. One of her pictures was my baby brother.

We have a little dog, his name is "Tag," he sleeps in the shed. One night some rats got in his bed, which is a large soap-box, and he barked so loud that it scared them all away, and we have not seen any since.

We all enjoy you very much and hope we will always be able to take you.

Your affectionate friend,

LOUISE E. B—.

DENVER, COL.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I am a little boy, nine years old. I have a little sister, two months old. I have only lived in Denver since April. I used to live at Parkersburg, W. Va., near Blennerhasset's Island, where Aaron Burr went to form his plot against our country. I went to Pike's Peak this summer. It took five hours to go up and three to return. It is nearly three miles in the air. I went in a big wagon drawn by four horses for eight miles, which is half-way, and then there were four mules put in harness, in place of the horses. We could see it raining hard all beneath us, and for a long time not a drop came near us. Denver is a very pretty place to live in, with broad streets, and about one hundred miles of cable-roads. I like it very much, but I miss the rain.

I have taken you for three years. Your little friend,

REGINALD CECIL S—.

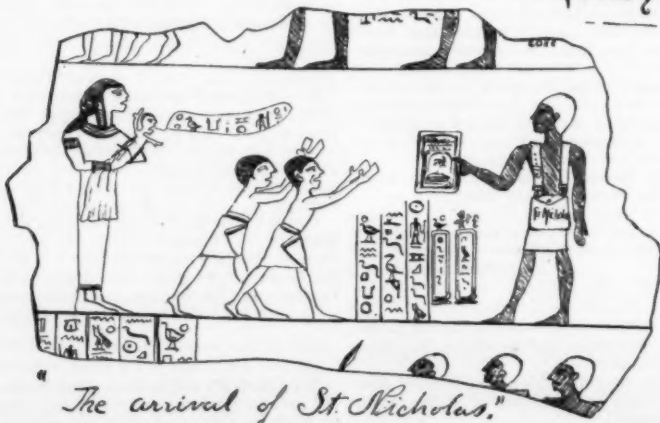
EVANSTON, ILL.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I got you on Christmas, and think you are the best magazine going. We have taken you for ten years. At first I could not read you, on account of weak eyes. I am ten years old and have two brothers, Richard and George.

We went to England last summer, and came back on the same steamer with Mrs. Burnett. She had her boys with her, and I used to play with them. Their names are Lionel and Vivian.

WE take pleasure in printing a picture sent to us by a young friend, Master E. A. Cleveland Cox, who says the sketch shows the arrival of St. NICHOLAS in a household of ancient Egypt. The young artist is evidently familiar with the Aztec pictures by Mr. J. G. Francis, which have appeared from time to time in St. NICHOLAS.

From Thebes



I have a dog named "Watch." He is a shepherd-dog. So, with three cheers, I wish old St. NICK a long life. Your interested reader, "JOEY" N—.

RALEIGH, N. C.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: Can you find room in your "Letter-box" for a little "tar-heel"? Brother and I do want to tell you that we are delighted with the St. NICHOLAS, and we will always speak a good word for it.

So many of your little subscribers have told amusing incidents about their little brothers and sisters, that I would like to tell one of my brother. He was very fond of tea-cakes. One day Grandma gave him a balsam seed and told him to plant it in the garden, and a tea-cake tree would come up. He did so, watching it carefully every day; at last he was rewarded by seeing a little tree full of tea-cakes just where he had planted his seed; he clapped his hands and exclaimed, "Oh! my tea-cake seed has come up"; he soon discovered the trick, but as he had an apronful of cakes he could afford to enjoy the joke with us. Your sincere admirer, LOULA H. B—.

WE thank the young friends whose names follow for pleasant letters which we have received from them: Mabel R., Allen D. P., Sarah G. N., Jessie W. K., Paul R., Edith P. J., Mabel R., Hazel Duncan and Mamma, Louise Parrish, Rose Hooper, Agnes G., Rowland H., Virginia L. and Bessie R., Marietta B. H., Margaret A., Mary B. J., Vinnie S., "S. M. A.," "Agrippa," George K. G., Orville H., Lucy and Alice, Kathie A., Ernest H. H., Mina S., Katrina MacM., Leon R., Isabel L., Lucy W., Louie M. C., Annie M. C., L. M., Scott K., May K., Clifford M. B., Alice V. F. and Augusta N. T., Nellie L., George H. E., Charlotte E. B., Nellie McL., Willie S., Arthur L., J. Hall, Willie O., Lois Y., John K. T., Muriel A. T., Minnie H. and Bessie G., Maud and Muriel F., B. H., Tone McC., Ernest J. L., Lina D., Amy L. H., William C., and Jennie G.

THE RIDDLE-BOX.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN THE FEBRUARY NUMBER.

DIAGONALS. Across: 1. Sales. 2. Tares. 3. Drama. 4. Stubs. 5. Steam.

WORD-SQUARE. 1. Madcap. 2. Amerce. 3. Device. 4. Crinel. 5. Accede. 6. Peeled.

EASY ZIGZAG. Diophantus. Cross-words: 1. Dark. 2. File. 3. Drop. 4. Chop. 5. Ache. 6. Calm.

7. Near. 8. Stab. 9. Shun. 10. Mass.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC. Primals, Priam; finals, Salad. Cross-words: 1. Princes. 2. Regalia. 3. Initial. 4. Amphora. 5. Mermaid.

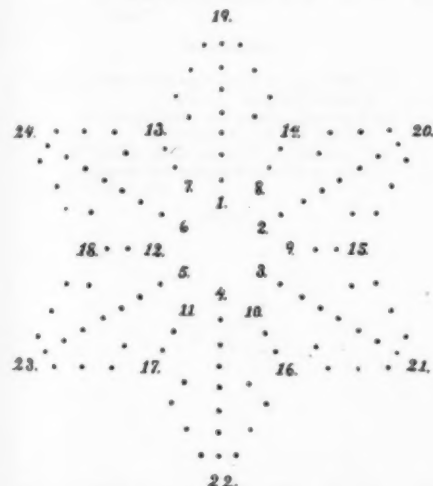
WORD-BUILDING. I. I, it, tie, bite, tribe, bestir, blister, bristles. II. I, in, din, dine, fiend, define, refined, befriend. III. A, am, mat, team, steam, master, matters, mattress, teamsters, smatterers. IV. O, on, one, note, stone, honest, hornets, shortens.

TO OUR PUZZLERS: Answers, to be acknowledged in the magazine, must be received not later than the 15th of each month, and should be addressed to ST. NICHOLAS "Riddle-box," care of THE CENTURY CO., 33 East Seventeenth St., New York City.

ANSWERS TO ALL THE PUZZLES IN THE DECEMBER NUMBER were received, before December 15th, from Maude E. Palmer—Louise Ingham Adams—"M., Aunt M., and S."—Paul Reese—A. L. W. L.—K. G. S.—J. R. Davis—Jo and I—Aunt Kate, Mamma, and James P. R.—Maxie and Jackspar—M. B. Head—J. B. Swann—Clara B. Orwig—May Dunning—Howard K. Hill—Pearl F. Stevens—Nellie and Reggie—Lillian Thorpe—Helen C. McCleary—"The Wise Five"—Emily and Annie Dembitz and "Kaiser"—Miss Flint."

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN THE DECEMBER NUMBER were received, before December 15th, from B. and W., 2—H. M. Rogers, 1—A. W. and A. P. C. Ashhurst, 4—M. Pattillo, 1—May N., 1—Arthur B. Lawrence, 5—Lady Betty, 2—Jennie and Edith, 1—Thomas Doane Perry, 1—Lillie Anthony, 1—"Sir Roger de Coverley," 1—"Pug," 1—Grace Cleghorn, 2—George A. Miller, Jr., 5—Emma Sydney, 6—Earl Frothingham, 6—C. L. W., 2—Eric M. Crickart, 1—Helen Schussler, 1—Harmon S., 1—S. and L. F., 1—Eleanor Hurd, 2—Effie K. Talboys, 6—Jack F. Babcock, 1—J. R. Williamson, 2—Elaine S., 1—Damon and Pythias, 4—John W. Frothingham, Jr., 3—X. X., 3—"Infantry," 5—Pauline and Honora, 1—R. Jackson, 1—Nellie L. Howes, 5—M. D. and C. M., 5—Nagrom, 2—"S. S.," 5—Kate Guthrie, 3—Tracy R. Kelley, 1—Maud T., 4.

A STAR PUZZLE.



FROM 1 to 6, our country's highest assembly; from 13 to 18, what this country consists of; from 19 to 24 are those who have a voice in the government; from 19 to 1, triumphs; from 20 to 2 is what the law demands; from 21 to 3, a military expert; from 22 to 4, a character in

PRIMAL ACROSTIC. Valentine. 1. Ventilator. 2. Attenuated. 3. Languisher. 4. Enigmatist. 5. Necromancy. 6. Tinctorial. 7. Imposthume. 8. Nucleiform. 9. Empiricism.

CROSS-WORD ENIGMA. The Tale of a Pony.

ABSENT VOWELS. Candlemas. 1. *Lucky* men need no counsel. 2. All is soon *ready* in an orderly house. 3. Many *hands* make light work. 4. Where the *hedge* is lowest men commonly leap over. 5. That is a wise *delay* which makes the road safe. 6. Honors set off merit; as *dress*, handsome persons. 7. Strain at a *gnat* and swallow a *camel*. 8. Two of a *trade* seldom agree. 9. Anger and *haste* hinder good counsel.

PROTEAN RHOMBOID. Across: 1. Leper. 2. Miles. 3. Toped. 4. Selah. 5. Laban.

"The Hunchback of Notre Dame"; from 23 to 5, a famous Dutch painter; from 24 to 6, a musical term meaning "with a restrained voice or moderate force"; from 19 to 13, ballots; from 19 to 14, a servant; from 20 to 14, apparent; from 20 to 15, an Italian town near the mouth of the Tiber; from 21 to 15, the Latin word for earth; from 21 to 16, a distinguishing feature; from 22 to 16, upright; from 22 to 17, a select body; from 23 to 17, a course; from 23 to 18, leases; from 24 to 18, sends by water; from 24 to 13, buildings where goods are sold by retail; from 13 to 14 (five letters), brief; from 14 to 15, the modern name for Thebes in Greece; from 15 to 16, having one end raised; from 16 to 17, a convulsion; from 17 to 18, noblemen; from 18 to 13, discharges of a gun; from 13 to 7, certain; from 14 to 8, unerring; from 15 to 9, the agave; from 16 to 10, neat; from 17 to 11, not difficult; from 18 to 12, a support.

CENTRAL ACROSTIC.

EACH of the words described contains an odd number of letters. When all have been rightly guessed the eight central letters will spell the name of the Roman emperor who owned the horse Incitatus.

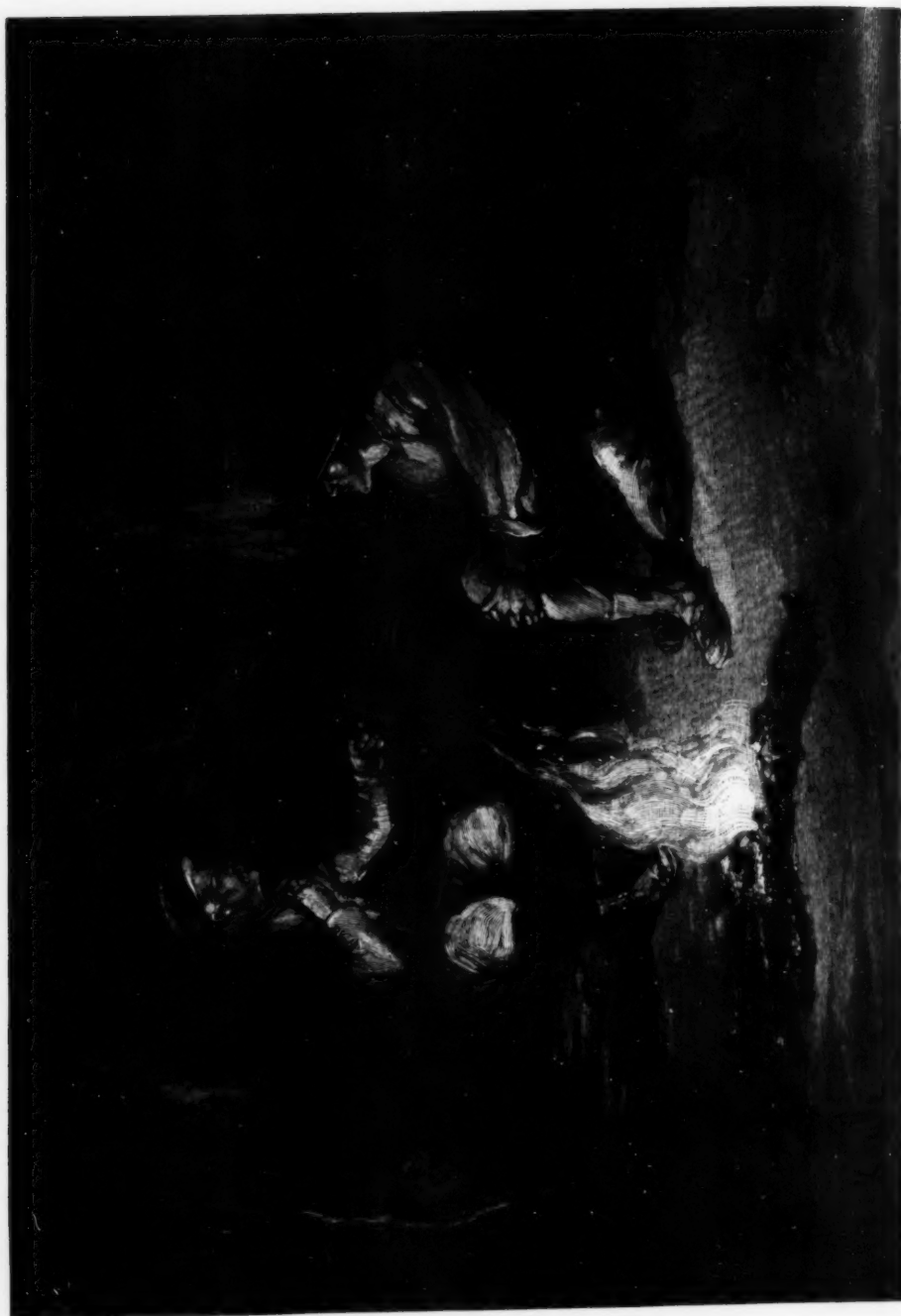
CROSS-WORDS: 1. A famous battle won by Henry V. of England. 2. The name of a queen of England who died at the age of seventy. 3. A Roman emperor who was slain in 69 A. D. 4. A celebrated friend and general of Augustus Caesar. 5. The inhabitants of a famous city which, for a long time, was a rival of Rome. 6. A name borne by many kings of France. 7. A name borne by four kings of England. 8. The wife of Louis VII. of France, and afterward the wife of Henry II. of England.

ISABEL V. M. L.

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A NIGHT ON THE CONGO.—STANLEY TELLING THE STORY OF HIS FIGHT WITH THE BANGALA.

(SEE PAGE 470.)

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